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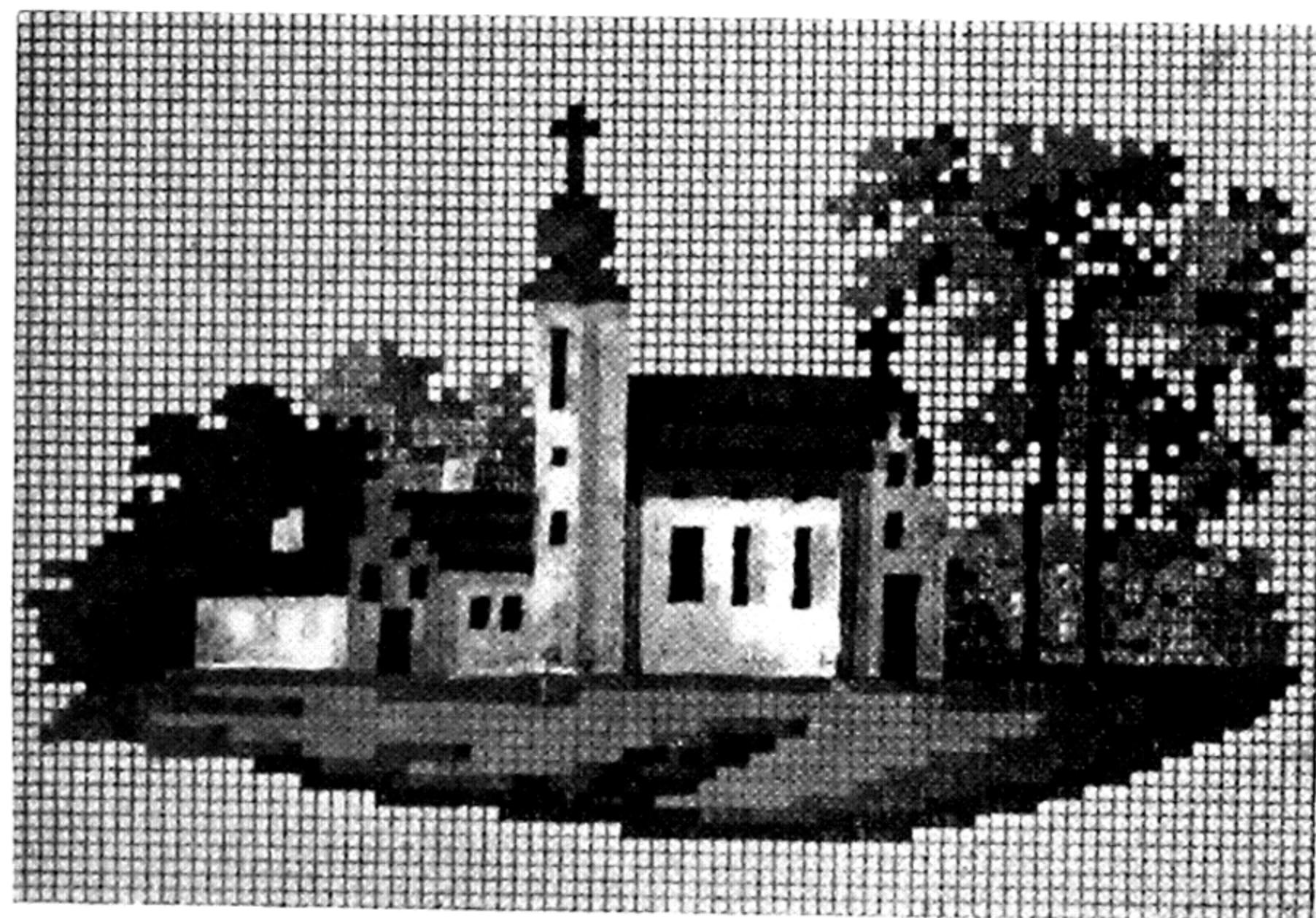
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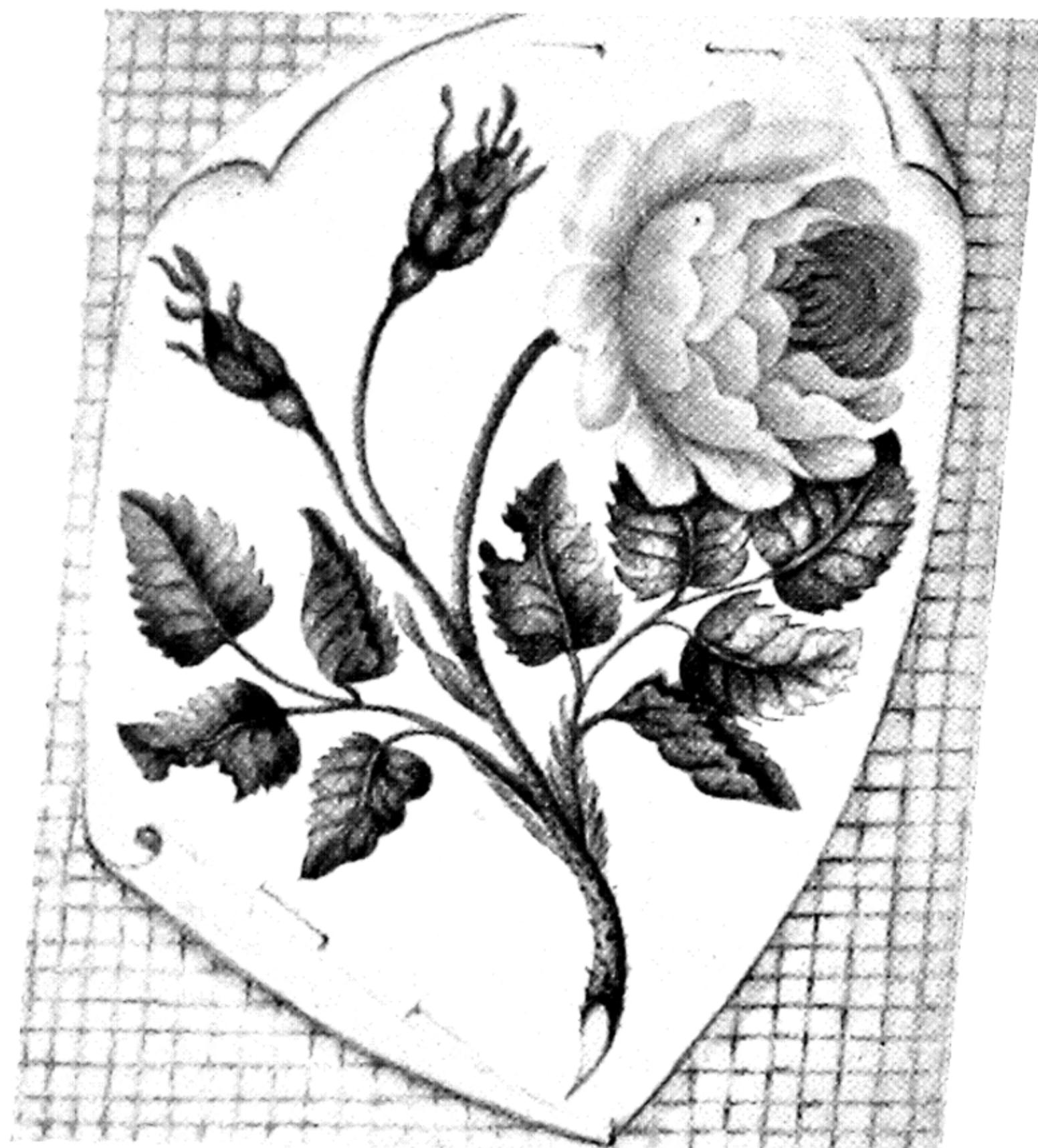


## A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

It has not been possible in present conditions to make this book as comprehensive as I could have wished. Treasures that I wanted to include are stored away, houses shut up, and even the Museums are partially or entirely closed. But thanks to Sir Eric Maclagan I have been able to draw upon the wonderful resources of the Victoria and Albert Museum, whilst Dr. Honeyman and Mr. Hannah of the Glasgow Art Gallery afforded me valuable assistance, conducting me through the safety vaults and having pieces of work specially photographed for me. To these I am deeply grateful, and I would also like to express my thanks to Mr. A. H. Williamson for lending me his designs, and to all those ladies who have allowed me to reproduce their work. Nor must I forget Miss Agnes McCredie of the Glasgow School of Art, who kindly allowed me to use some of the embroideries for which she is responsible, the encyclopædic Miss Jourdain, whose knowledge and help has saved me from many mistakes that I might otherwise have made, and "The Connoisseur," who put their files at my disposal and lent a number of illustration blocks.

ERNEST THESIGER, *April 1941*

*A D V E N T U R E S*  
*i n*  
*E M B R O I D E R Y*



B Y E R N E S T T H E S I G E R

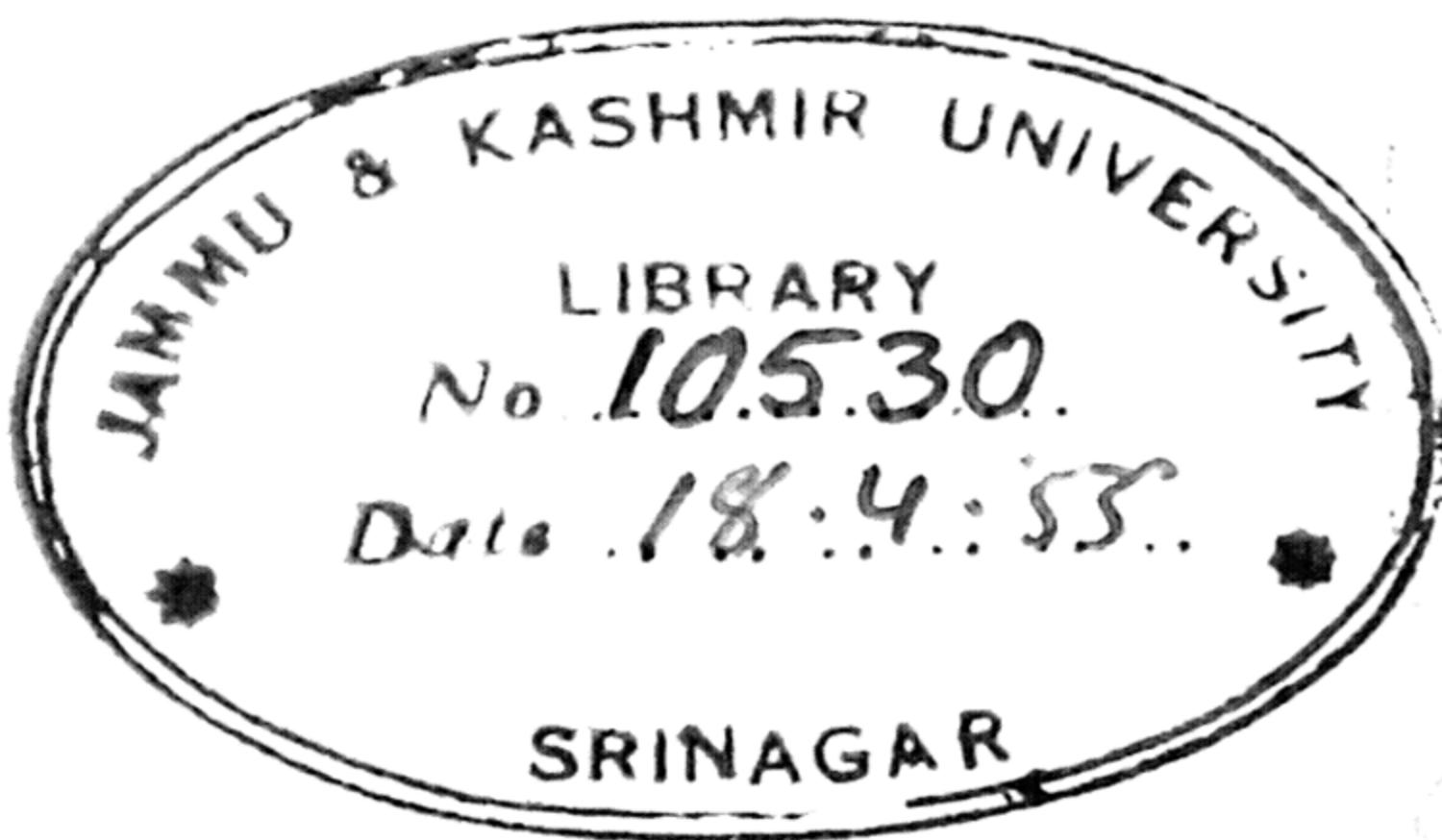
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T H E S T U D I O P U B L I C A T I O N S

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following books will be of use to those who wish to learn the various stitches used in embroidery.

Mary Thomas's Dictionary of Embroidery-Stitches	. . . . .	Hodder & Stoughton
Samplers and Stitches. Mrs. Archibald Christie	. . . . .	B. T. Batsford, Ltd.
Embroidery Design. Molly Booker . . . . .		The Studio Ltd.
Modern Embroidery. Mary Hogarth . . . . .		The Studio Ltd.
Encyclopædia of Needlework. Th. de Dillmont.	. . . . .	D.C.M. Library
Louisa F. Pesel's Portfolios . . . . .		Percy Lund Humphries

# NEEDLEWORK

as an ancient craft

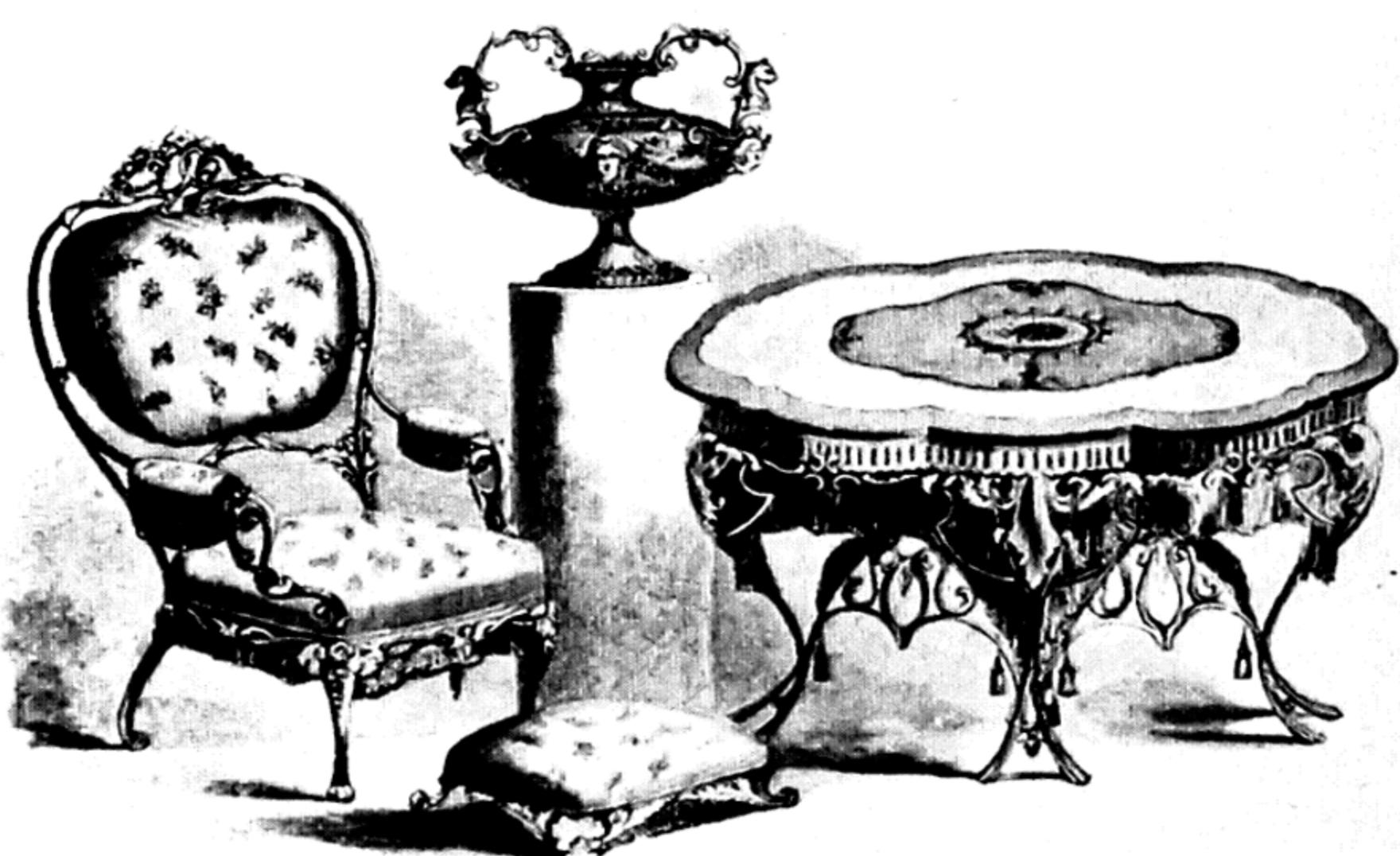
## EARLY EFFORTS

Though owing to the nature of the materials used but little of early needlework survives, embroidery is one of the oldest of the crafts, and has at its best ranked with painting and sculpture.

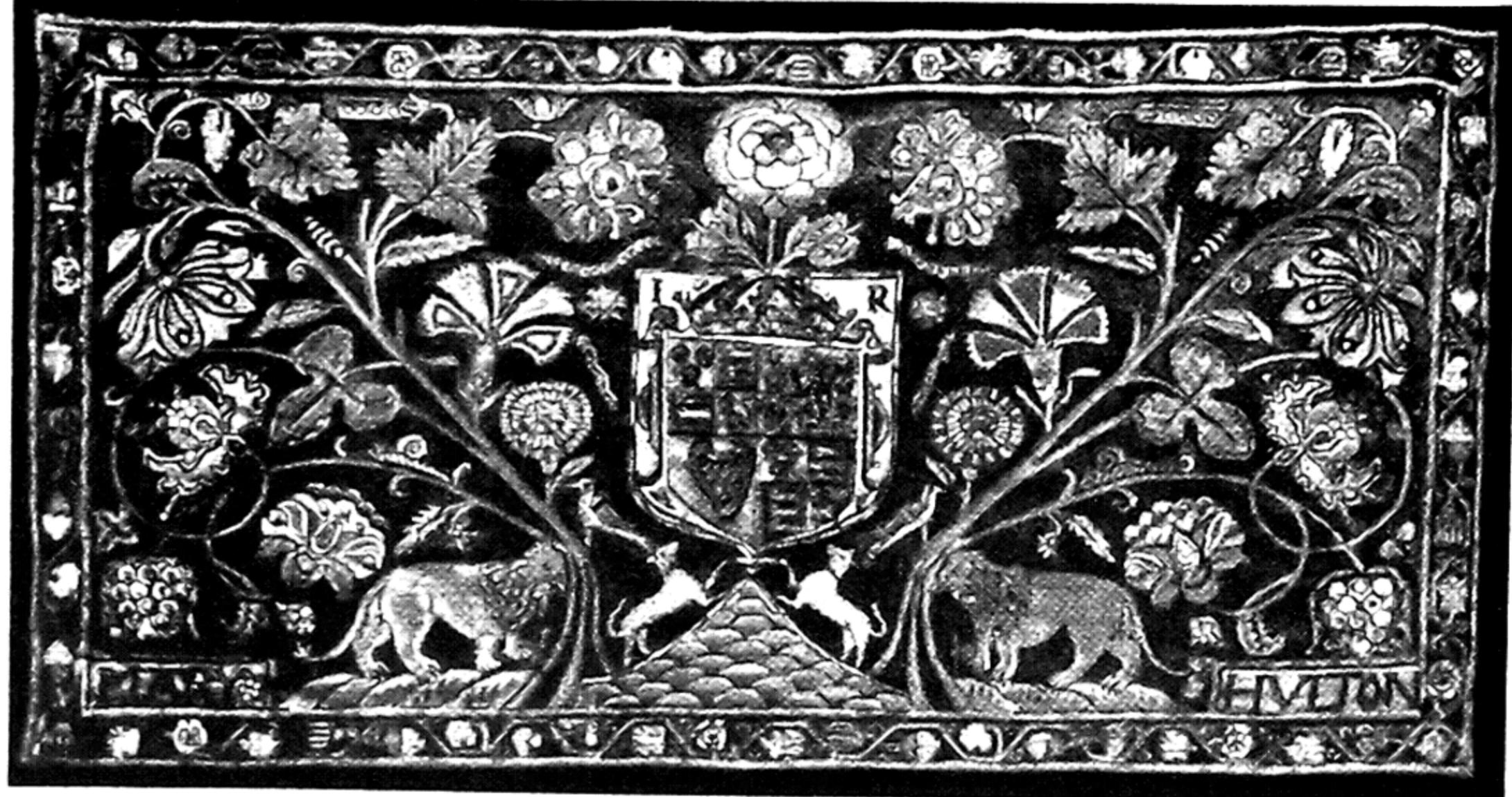
Embroidered hangings made for the tabernacle are minutely described in the Book of Exodus, but the oldest piece of needlework in existence is a portion of an embroidered garment of the 4th century B.C. that was found in the Crimea. It is only a fragment though, and nothing of importance exists earlier than the 5th century. This is a hanging made for an Egyptian tomb, and is strangely modern or rather 17th century in feeling.

In England the skill of embroiderers was held in repute as early as the 10th century and by the 13th century was known all over Europe. Most of this work, however, was ecclesiastical, though some of it was used for secular costume, and it was not until the reign of Queen Elizabeth that embroidered hangings seem to have been used for wall-decoration or domestic furniture to any great extent ; but when it did come to be so used it was often of a remarkable quality, as the hangings at Hardwick show. From that period onwards needlework was more used for chair covers, bed-hangings, and even carpets (as well as replacing the earlier woven tapestries) than it was for costume, and it is with embroidery as an adjunct to house-decoration that this book is primarily intended to deal.

*"Ars est celare artem"  
(Art is to conceal art).  
Much Victorian art was  
so well hidden that we  
have not yet been able  
to find it!*



*Panel on canvas, worked chiefly in tent- and cross-stitch with bordering coloured silk and fine gold threads. English 17th century, 39 x 20 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.*



## *A MEDIUM FOR SELF-EXPRESSION*

In the Victorian era the industry of the workers was more remarkable than their taste, but there has of late been a great revival in the interest in needle-work for the home. Unfortunately much of the work that is produced to-day is merely a slavish copy of the best work of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Needlework is one of the most persistent forms of self-expression, an outlet for the creative instinct that is so strong in everyone, and for it adequately to fulfil this purpose designer and worker should if possible be one and the same person ; at any rate they should be strongly in sympathy.

## *ON THE PURPOSE OF EMBROIDERY*

Stitchery, unlike sketching or even modelling, though not necessarily difficult of achievement, is a lengthy process, and it is obvious that much good work would be a mere waste of time and talent if the design and purpose of the work undertaken were not very carefully considered before a single stitch is taken. Often a worker, all-impatient to have something to show, embarks upon a piece of work without even deciding what it is intended to be. The result is an ornamented object of unpractical dimensions which cannot be made use of when finished.

I remember meeting a lady who had pieced together her wedding dress and had taken nearly twenty years to adorn it with an elaborate design in gold silk. It was intended as a present for her son on his twenty-first birthday. I ventured to ask to what use he would put it, and she seemed somewhat taken

aback. "Well," she said doubtfully, "It would do for a cover for the grand-piano," but even as she spoke I think she had misgivings and indeed what would anybody want with a vast oblong of ivory satin embroidered in gold! The whole *magnum opus* was a glaring example of wasted time and skill.

The first and most important thing therefore is to decide on what it is proposed to expend one's labours and to help in this choice it is useful to refer to the past and see to what use the workers of former days put their industry.

The museums of course provide many beautiful examples which are accessible to everyone, but the ideal thing is to see work in its original setting, that is, in the very rooms for which the work was done.

The owners of big and ancient houses have been most kind in throwing open their doors to the public on many occasions, and no such opportunity of seeing the insides of these beautiful monuments should be neglected. To those to whom such visits are not possible the files of such magazines as "*Country Life*," "*The Connoisseur*," "*Apollo*" and "*The Burlington Magazine*" are available and well repay scrutiny.

Let us pay an imaginary visit to some well-stocked house of the 18th century, which would, besides contemporary work, doubtless contain some treasures of earlier periods. The walls are hung with tapestry, chiefly woven panels but in many cases needlework has been used to give a similar effect. Tapestry designs were often reproduced in "*petit-point*" or tent-stitch but these were usually on a smaller scale than the original hangings and were more like needlework pictures. The 17th century hangings from a house in Hatton Garden (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum) were, however, quite definitely designed for needlework and a variety of stitches adds interest to the fine design. The Hardwick hangings I have already mentioned.

Another remarkable set of hangings in tent-stitch comes from Stoke Edith. These are 18th century and were supposed to have been worked by the five wives of the then owner of that place. They represent garden scenes and are lively and amusing besides being monuments of industry.

Wall hangings were often made in appliquéd work as well as in wool work on canvas and this is a very effective medium for large panels. Pilasters in churches were frequently hung with strips of applied velvet or silk and the space between windows can often be well treated in this way. American hangings are effectively carried out in a combination of quilted work and appliquéd and this method of decorating cotton materials is largely used there for bedspreads. Quilting is, of course, very popular in Wales and in Durham, especially among the wives of the miners, but it is only in the United States that I have seen quilting combined with appliquéd or coloured patchwork and the result is most decorative.



*This pilaster hanging from the Victoria and Albert Museum in appliquéd work is of linen and silk on velvet with additional details in strips of gilt copper. It is of the 17th century, and is very probably Portuguese.*

## *THE EAST INSPIRES WESTERN DESIGN*

Another kind of hanging came into fashion in the 17th century and this was suggested by the so-called palampores from the East. Designs from the printed cottons of East India influenced the wool hangings of the first half of the 18th century, while later these were inspired with a definitely Chinese feeling. But whether suggested by India or China these English hangings are nearly all alike in that the design invariably consists of one large tree growing up the centre of the panel on the side branches of which grow strange varieties of flowers, fruit and foliage. The design springs from what looks like little hills or possibly large stones, and on these too, perhaps, there are flowers growing. Occasionally birds or even rabbits and squirrels are introduced into the design, the birds in particular being very oriental and exotic in feeling. These palampore designs were the origin and inspiration of what is generally known as Jacobean work which besides being used for wall-hangings was much in demand for bedspreads and curtains. They are worked on linen wools, chiefly in tones of greens and browns, but unlike the other hangings we have noticed, the linen background in these is left unworked. This kind of work has been cleverly reproduced on printed linens and cretonnes and for that reason is less to be recommended for handwork. After all, one of the chief points in needlework is to produce something that cannot be done by machinery or even be imitated by a mechanical process, though a machine worked by an individual (for chain-stitch for instance) can often produce very pleasing and original results in a comparatively short time.

Of course in these days it is rarely possible to find time to make a large wall-covering in petit-point and so we shall have to consider some quicker method of getting a similar effect, but for the moment let us continue our imaginary tour round the house and see what else it will suggest to us.



*A late 17th century border chiefly in Hungarian point-stitch in silk and wool on canvas. It is Italian, and its resemblance to the Drayton chairs made me suspect them of being of Italian origin. From the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

## THE WORKING OF CHAIR SEATS

Chairs are the most common, and taking it all round, the most practical subjects for the needleworker to tackle. The earlier chairs, those for instance of the 16th century, were often covered with Turkey-work, which gives an effect rather like a pile carpet, the wool being knotted into the canvas. Runners for use on oak buffets and court-cupboards were also made in the same stitch, the bright colours generally used serving to relieve the heaviness of the dark wood work.

But the most usual covering for chairs is linen or canvas worked in "gros-point," that is cross-stitch, or "petit-point," which is another name for tent-stitch, or in a combination of the two. Frequently the work has a central panel with a pictorial subject in fine stitch, the subject being suggested, as in the needlework pictures above mentioned, by the figures on woven tapestry ; the border, usually more or less geometrical, but sometimes floral, is carried out in gros-point. Wool is mainly used, but silk is sometimes introduced into the lighter stitches, which has the effect of giving life and brightness to the design.

In English work of the 18th century figure subjects were less in use for chair-seats and backs and the designs were chiefly floral, moreover the best pieces were entirely executed in petit-point. In a beautiful set of Charles the Second chairs at Drayton House, a variety of stitches is used, such as satin-stitch, long and short, and tent-stitch, while the background of rusty black is worked in a kind of Hungarian stitch—zigzag rows of long stitches being divided by rows of short ones. There is also in the same house a four-post bed which has hangings of the same kind of work, which are still in a wonderful state of preservation. The work is not unlike that reproduced on page 13 which makes me suspect an Italian origin, though this is mere guesswork.

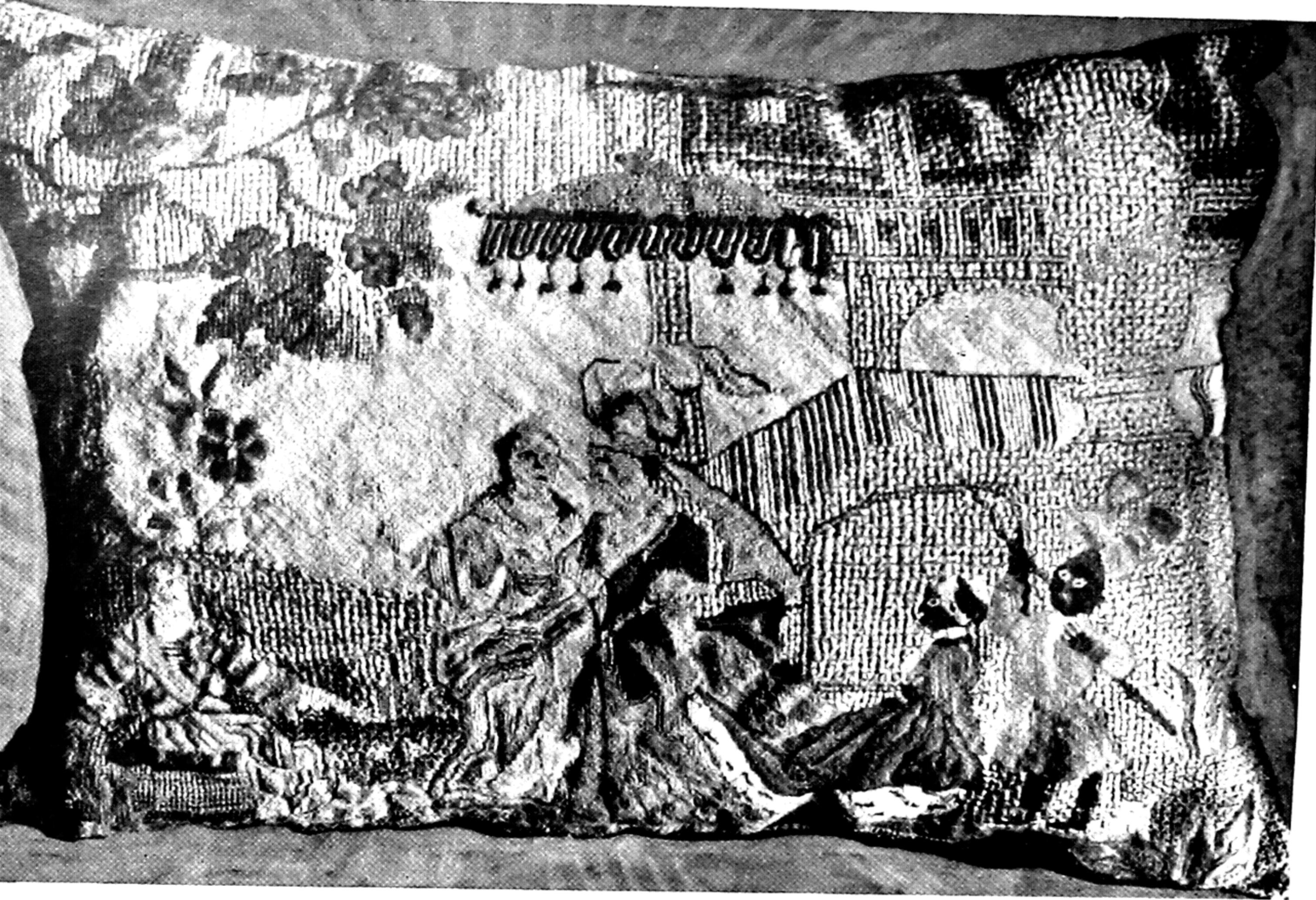
One sometimes sees English chairs and settees covered with appliquéd velvet or satin, but for the most part this style of chair covering indicates that the chairs are Italian or Spanish and though richly decorative is not so practical for hard wearing as the more common ones upholstered in wool-embroidered canvas. Though some of this work has mellowed with time and the woollies have faded a little from the sun, it is a mistake to imagine that these chairs were originally anything but richly brilliant in colour. A glance at the back of any 18th century piece will prove how fresh and alive the colour was intended to be and indeed still is in many cases, for the dyes used in those days were vastly superior to those of to-day. Some of the beautiful rose-pinks so often found in period pieces are practically unobtainable to-day and in

*This chair, worked by Miss Tess Hope, is in petit-point on a very fine canvas, and is in French 18th century style tapestry. The groundwork is bright yellow.*



order to get the desired effect Berlin wools have to be used though they are not really satisfactory as they are not nearly so durable as tapestry or crewel wools.

But no one starting a piece of work should be deceived into using pastel shades in the hope of making their work look like an antique ; even when freshly done the colours would look wishy-washy and in a very short time would be drained of any colour at all. The colours should be matched as far as possible to the backs of the old piece—time and smoke will quite soon enough give them the required “patine.”



*Old embroidered cushion, probably 18th century, in a variety of stitches. From the collection of Miss Tess Hope. The work when found was in an incomplete state, and has recently been finished by a contemporary needle.*

## THE MAKING OF CUSHIONS AND PILLOWS

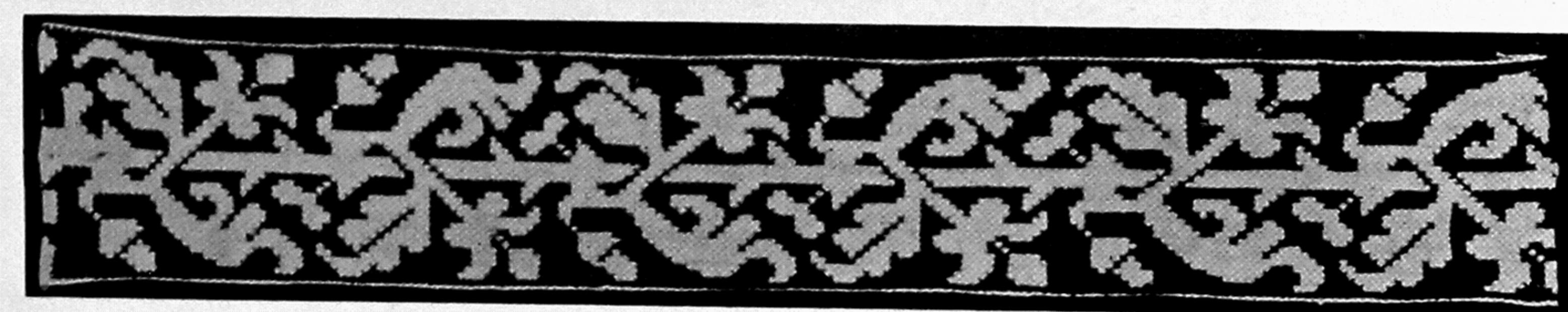
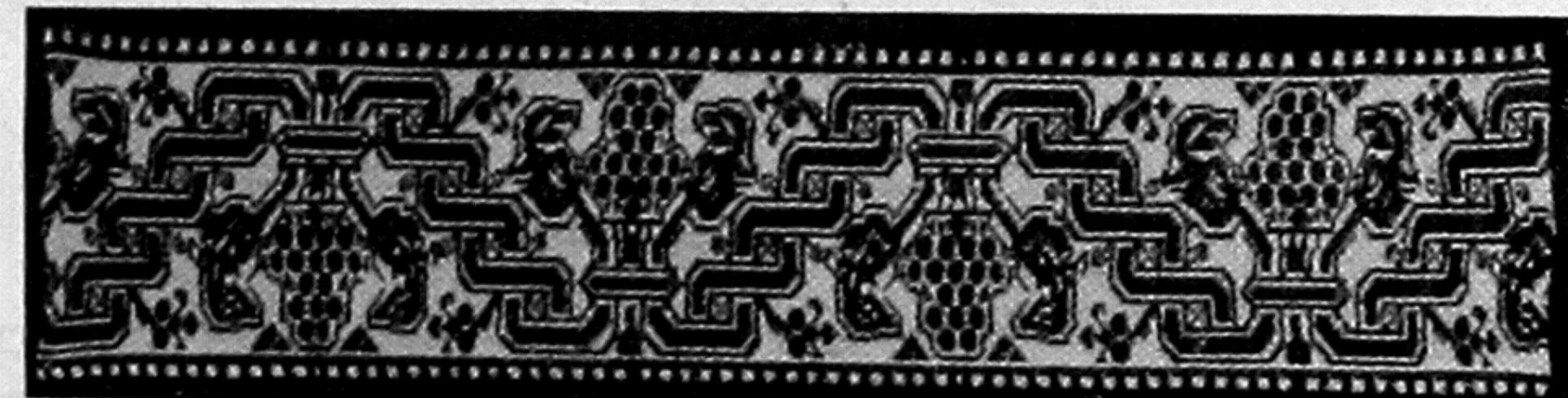
From chairs we pass naturally to cushions and they are made in various ways, many resembling the chairs for which they were made. But there is one kind of work that has not so far been touched upon and that is "Spanish work" and this particular kind of embroidery is very often found on cushions and bed pillows. Spanish work is always done in black on white and is usually worked in silk on white or cream-coloured linen. It was extensively used on tunics, dresses and caps in the reign of Henry the Eighth, whose wife Catherine of Aragon is reputed to have introduced it into England. Every variety of stitch is used, the more the better as, lacking colour, the stitchery needs to be varied to give interest to the design.

## ASSISI WORK

"Assisi" work, which is another useful stitch for cushions and the borders of tablecloths and mats, is also carried out in one colour only--usually in red, though black, green, blue or even yellow is equally effective. In this work, which is done in silk or flax-thread on natural coloured linen, the actual

design is left free of stitchery whilst the background is entirely filled in either with cross-stitch or eyelet-stitch. A few delicate details can afterwards be added in Holbein stitch, but these should encroach very little on to the design. A pattern can be first drawn out on squared paper or traced directly on to the material, the designs most frequently employed being of an heraldic nature or a repeating geometrical pattern. This Italian work is closely allied to the embroidery produced in other countries, Hungary, Rumania and Russia for instance, but the most beautiful designs are undoubtedly Italian.

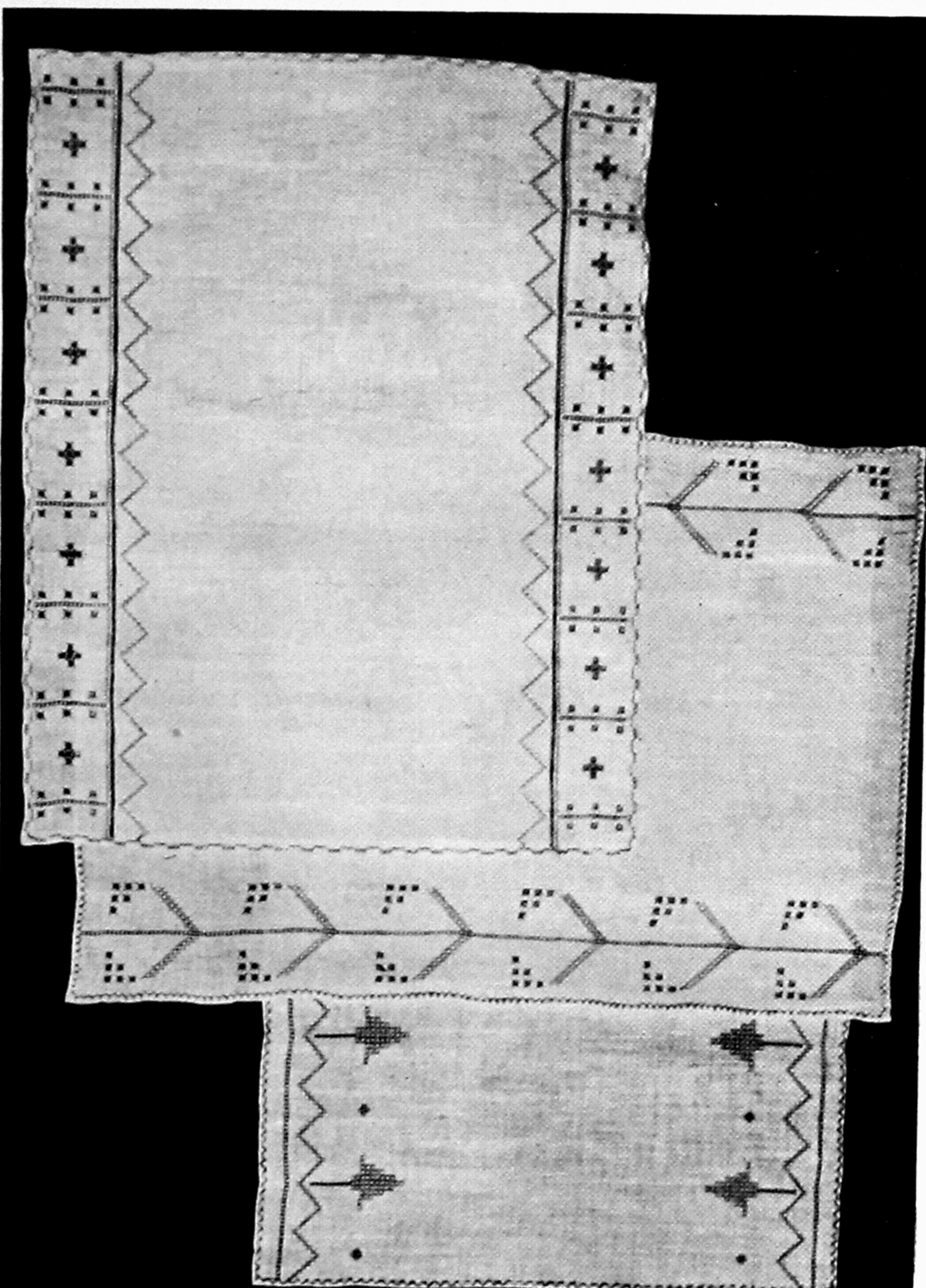
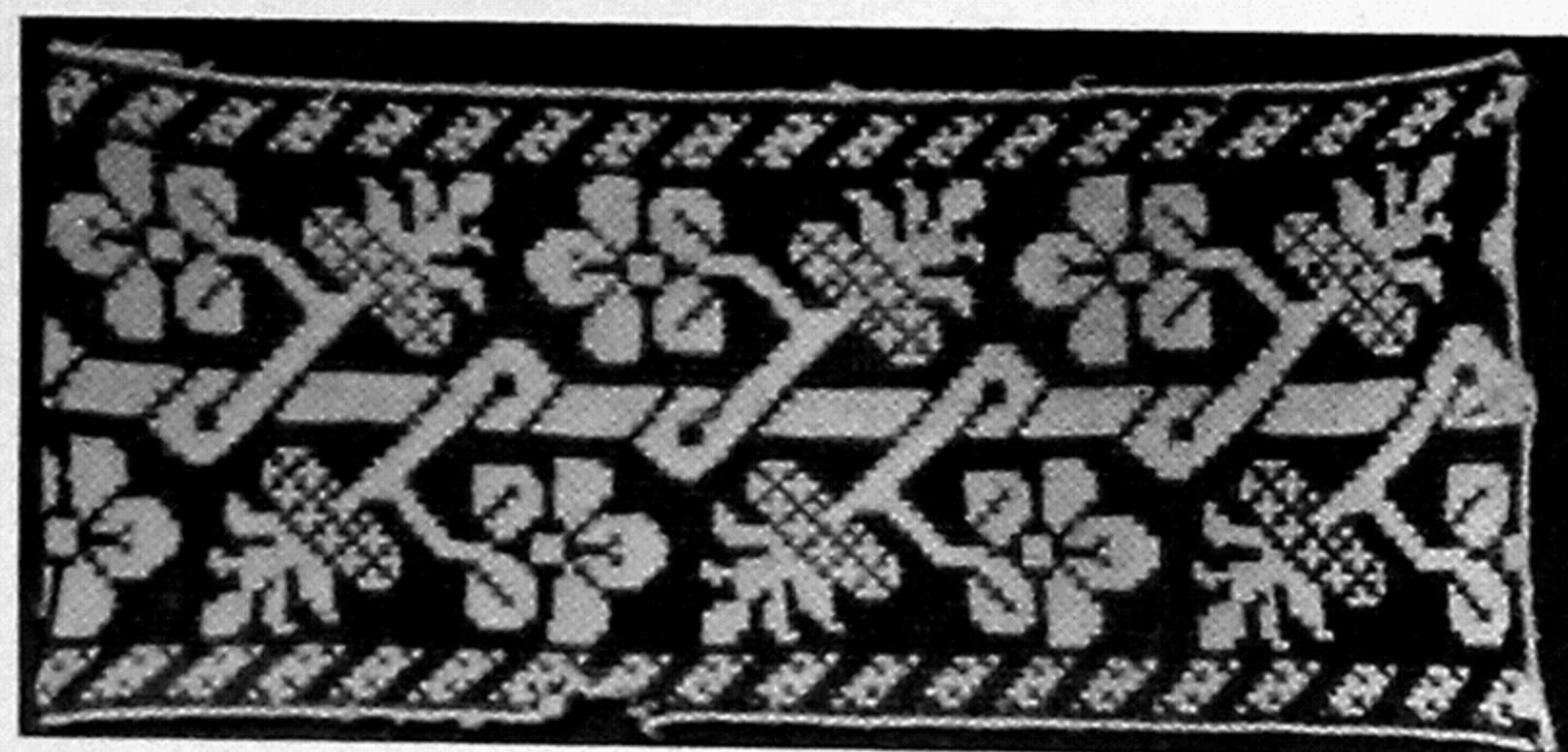
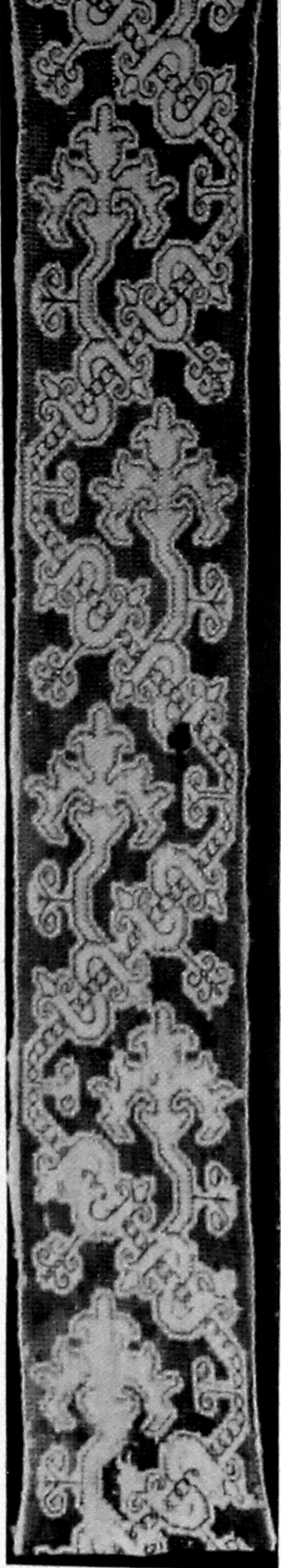
*Italian  
Borders chiefly  
in Assisi work, 18th  
century, embroidered  
in red silk on linen. The  
back-ground is mostly in cross-  
stitch, though in some  
cases eyelet-stitch is  
used. From the  
Glasgow Art  
Gallery.*





*Cloth of linen  
scrim worked in  
red, using various  
drawn fabric stit-  
ches. Designed  
and executed by a  
student of the  
Glasgow School of  
Art.*





*These table mats in a free form of Assisi work were designed and executed by students of the Glasgow School of Art.*

*Above and Left : Linen borders embroidered in red silk. Italian, 18th century.*

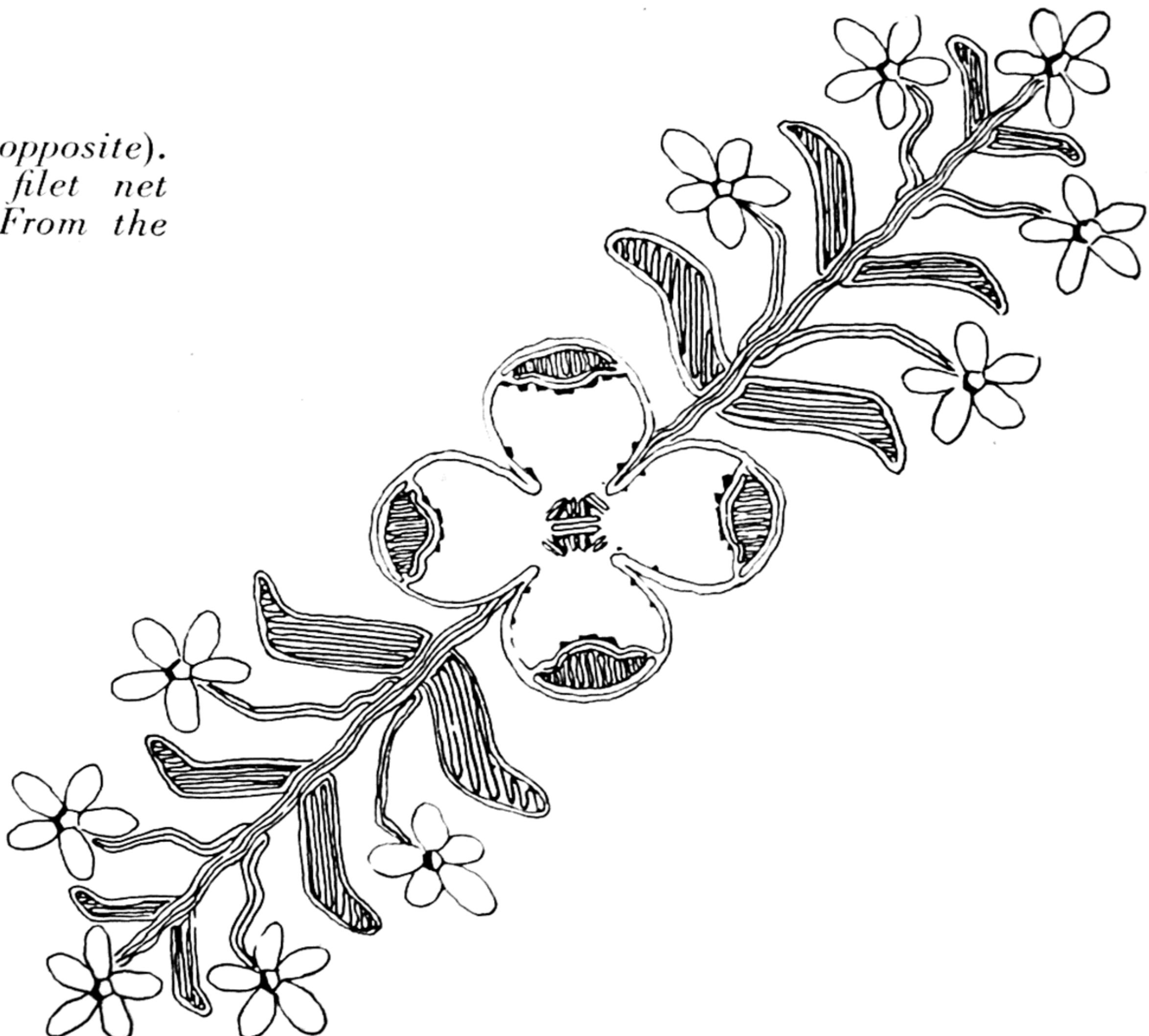
## SPANISH LACE

Spanish work is not to be confused with what is sometimes called "Spanish lace," which is actually a filet net worked over with various coloured silks. It is a very lovely and rich-looking form of needlework and can be put to many uses such as table-centres, runners and mats. It can also be used for larger articles such as bedspreads, but it is of course too fragile for any hard-wearing purpose. A somewhat more durable form of this kind of work is filet net *darned*, as opposed to being embroidered over, with a self coloured thread. A fairly coarse net is used and the thread should be slightly thicker than the mesh of the net itself. A simple but effective example of this work is shown opposite.

## NEEDLEWORK SCREENS

Needlework screens of any period from the 17th to the 20th century can be found in almost all houses possessed of embroidery and there are few better ways of showing off needlework than by framing it in a gold frame with low legs or in a walnut or mahogany frame on a pole. Chippendale designed many pole-screens and petit-point was sometimes used to fill the frames though Chinese paper was then more usual. The later Sheraton firescreens are frequently oval or shield-shaped, and these are filled with silk embroidery,

*A motif from the Cover (opposite). Thread embroidery on filet net mounted on red silk. From the Glasgow Art Gallery.*





sequins being sometimes introduced with good effect. The Sheraton wood-work, being lighter than Chippendale's, calls for a delicate stitchery which would be overweighted if the frame were heavier.

One sometimes comes across pole-screens on silk or satin worked in black silk, the object being to represent a line engraving. Figure subjects are used and colour is introduced into the borders, which are mostly of a floral or ribbon pattern. At one time many embroidered pictures were made copied from prints or mezzotints, but personally I have a prejudice against needlework pictures that aim at looking like anything but needlework.

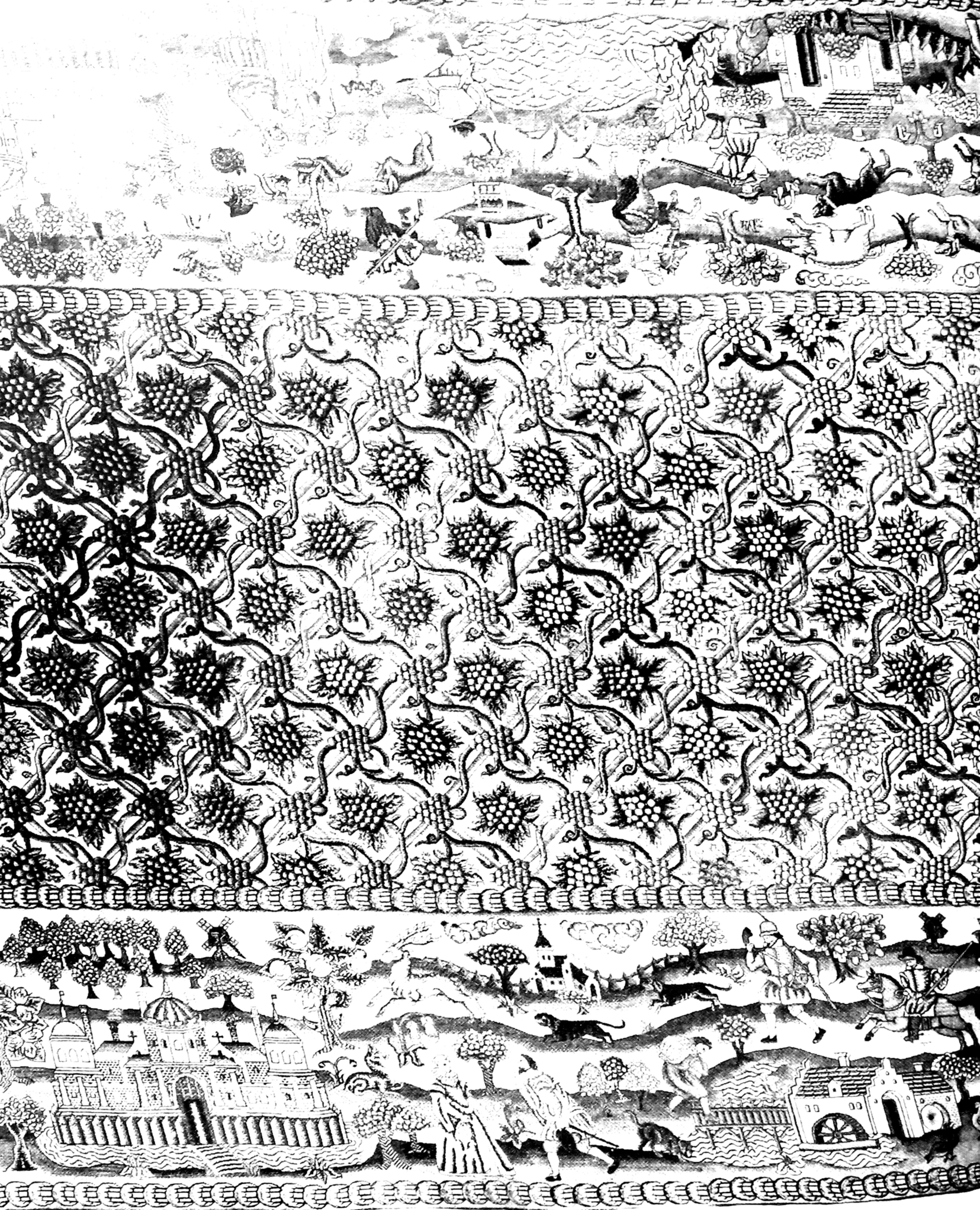
### *NEEDLEWORK CARPETS*

Some of the most beautiful wool-work was done for carpets, and several exquisite examples of these are to be found in such houses as Apethorpe and Castle Bromwich. There are also several fine examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which, until lately, used to include a very interesting one belonging to Sir Charles Welby.

For a room that is not subjected to too much hard usage a needlework carpet is a lovely adornment, though the precious old ones are now mostly used as wall-hangings.



*A Spanish rug in cross-stitch on canvas. It should be noticed how well-covered is the design, there being no empty spaces which are liable to make the work seem meagre. From the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

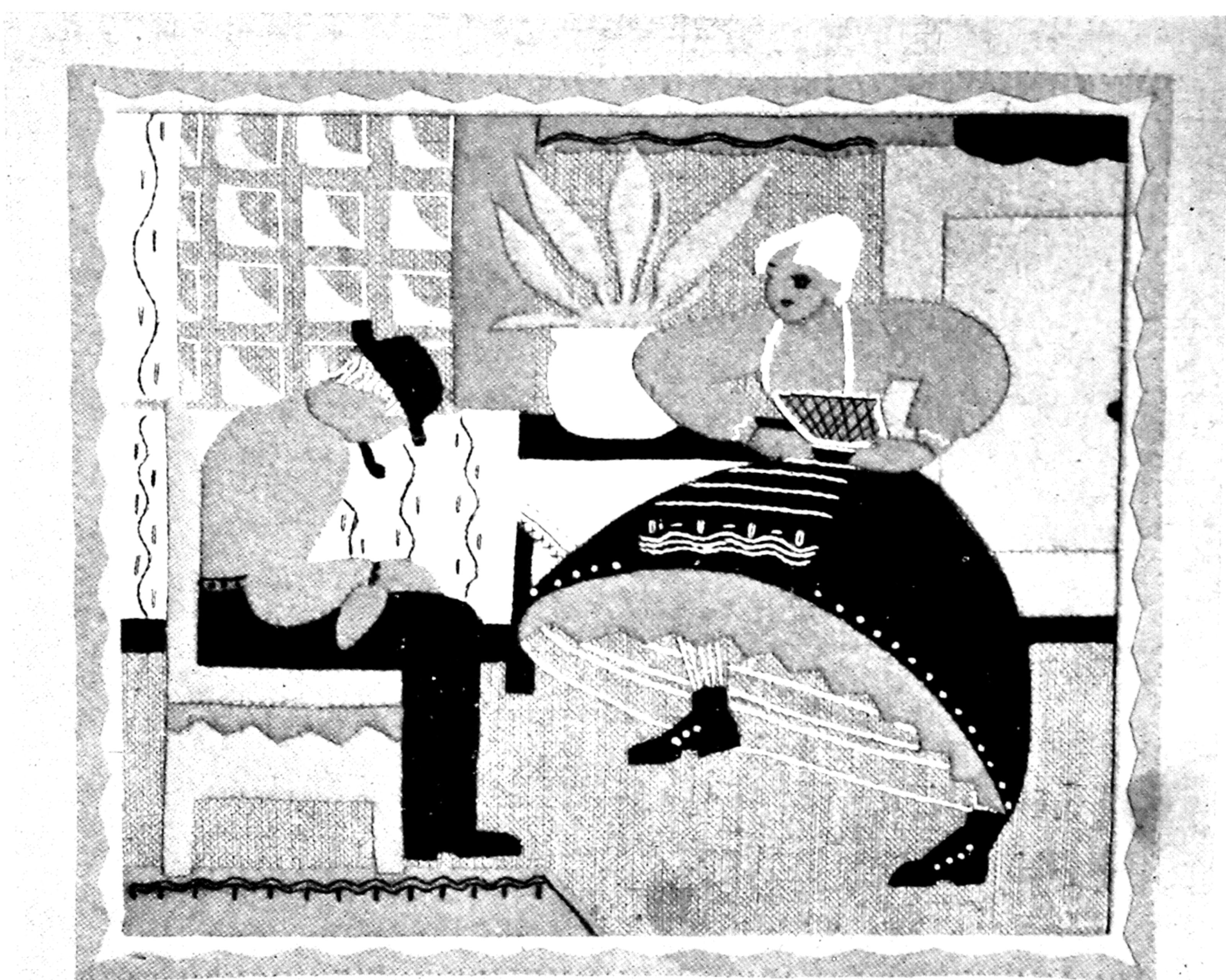




*This beautiful table-cover is embroidered in silk, tent-stitch (or petit-point) being employed. The period is Elizabethan, and it is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

# NEEDLEWORK

in modern life



"*The Scolding Wife*" was designed by Elspeth Ritchie of the Glasgow School of Art, and was carried out in her own individual way by Mrs. R. Sinclair of the Dumgoyne Rural Institute, who received the design and interpreted it on blue linen with felt, silk and organdie appliqués in darker blue, reds and dull yellow.

## ITS ADAPTATION TO THE HOME OF TO-DAY

Having considered what kind of needlework was done in the past to adorn the beautiful old houses of England, let us now see whether any of this work is suitable to the homes of to-day, or if not, how it can be adapted to make it more appropriate to the modern living-room. Wall hangings such as the

*This zoological sampler worked by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., is as amusing as her other contributions. One suspects it of being a record of her late husband's hunting achievements.*



*Behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains skipping upon the hills.*

T from E 1934

minutely worked ones of Stoke Edith would tax the patience of most workers in these busy days, when leisure for embroidery means at most an odd hour or two in the day, but hangings illustrative of the current life of to-day, just as these earlier ones were a comment on the 18th century mode of living, have been produced in America with amusing results. The house, the garden,



domestic pets, the family and the motor-car, all find their place in a large hanging I recently saw in Philadelphia, the only difference in the execution being that the larger spaces of colour were in appliqué work and the detail was added in embroidered stitches. Much of the background was just the linen on which the picture was worked, the whole thing relying more on design and a clever spacing of colour than on elaborate stitchery. Indeed in all work design plays the principal part, more especially if the work is simply executed and has not intricacy of needlecraft to give it interest.

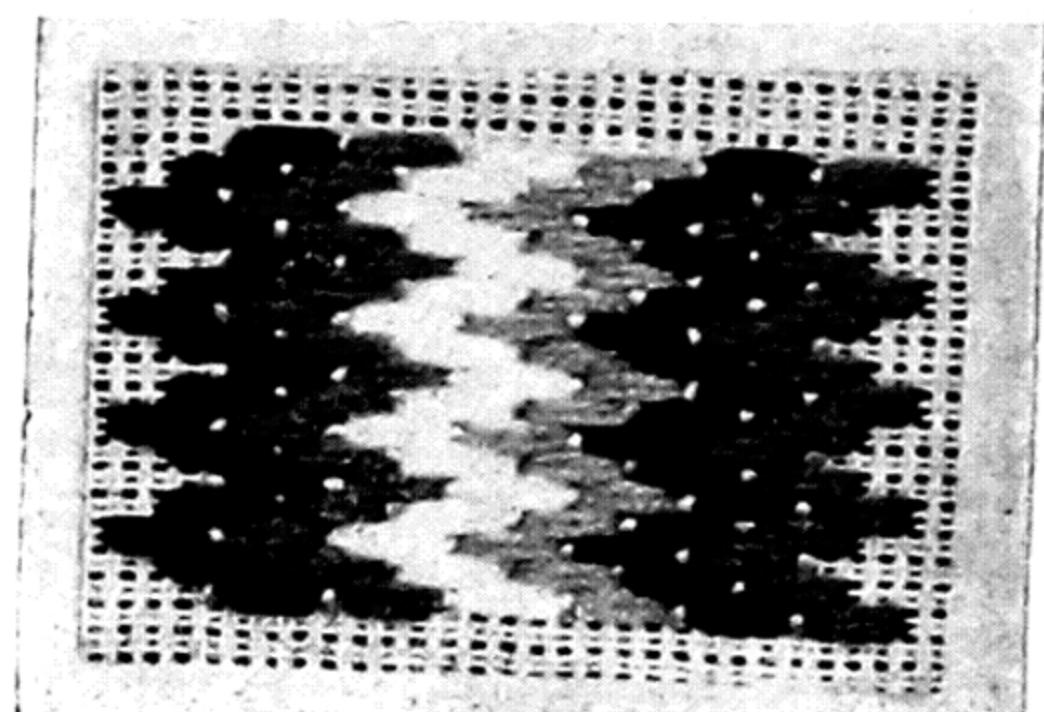
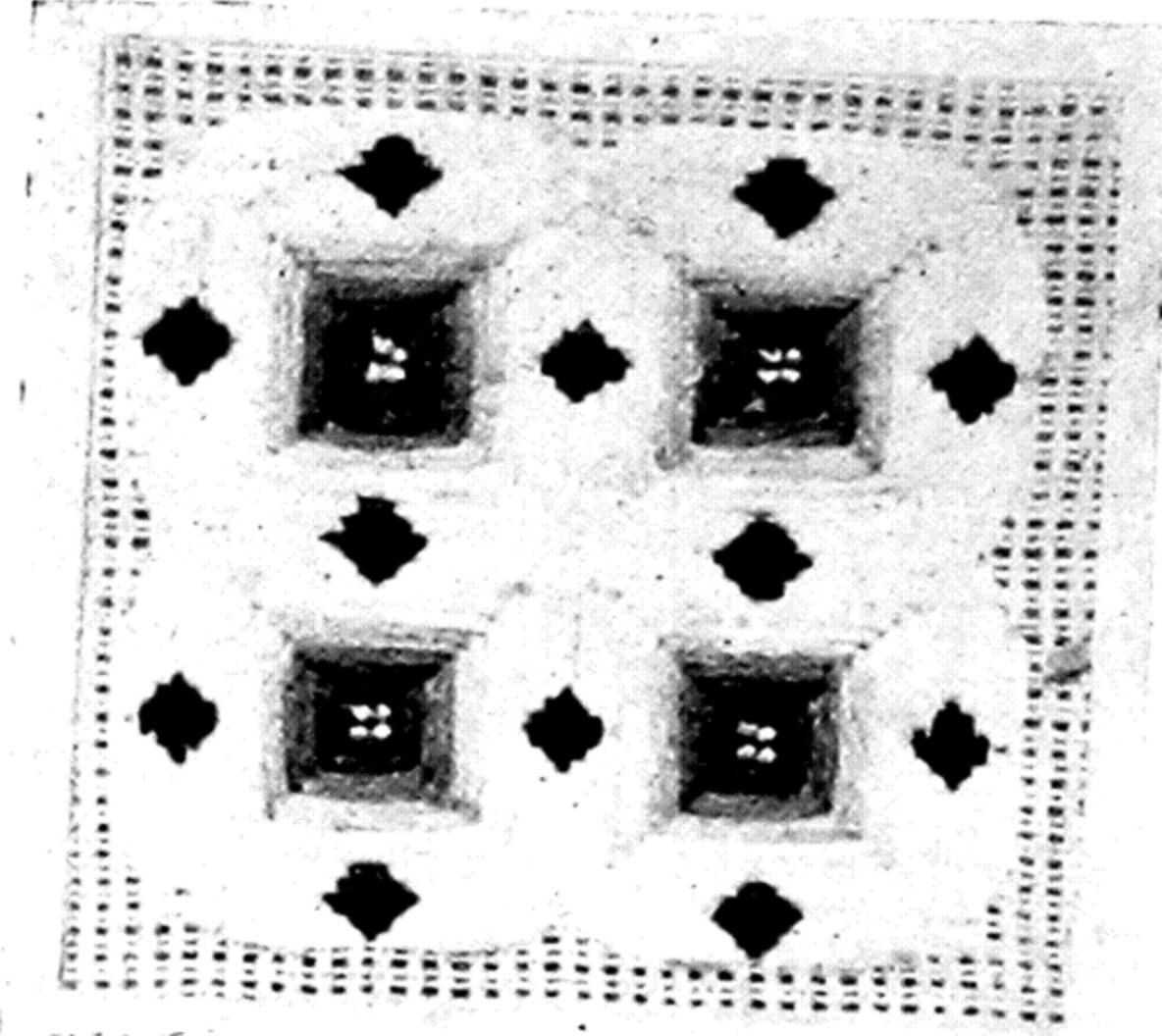
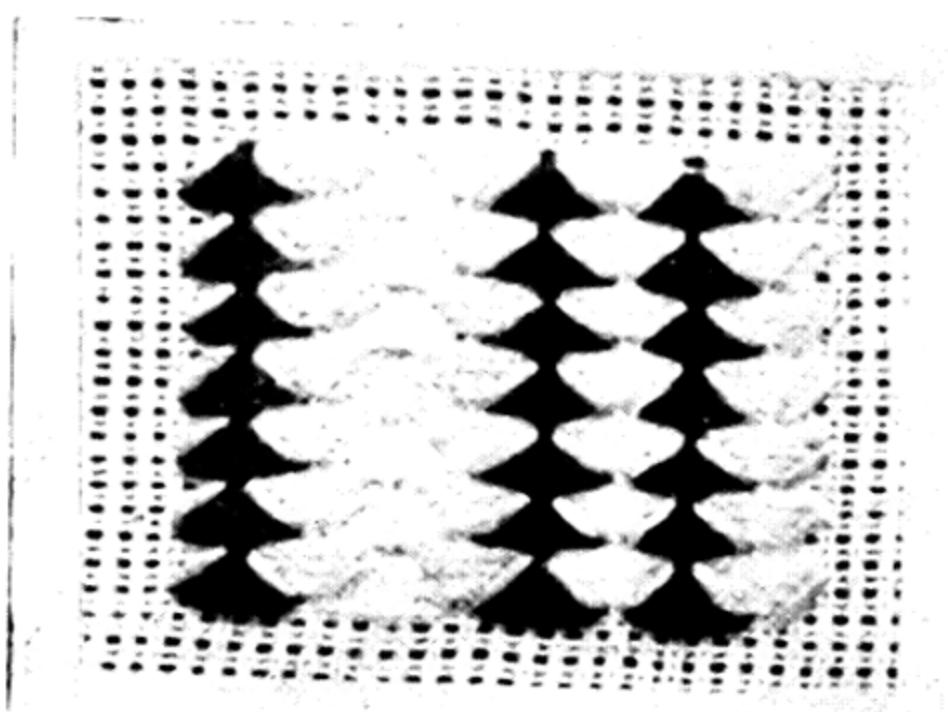
### THE SAMPLER

Of other needlework pictures intended to hang on a wall whether framed or unframed, the so-called sampler lends itself most readily to modern treatment.

*Left : Characteristic Victorian sampler, comprising the inevitable house with the moral sentiments invariably met with on such works. From the Glasgow School of Art.*

*Below : Sampler showing a wonderful variety of stitches and fittings, which is worth considering when translating new ideas into terms of stitchery. From the Victoria and Albert Museum*

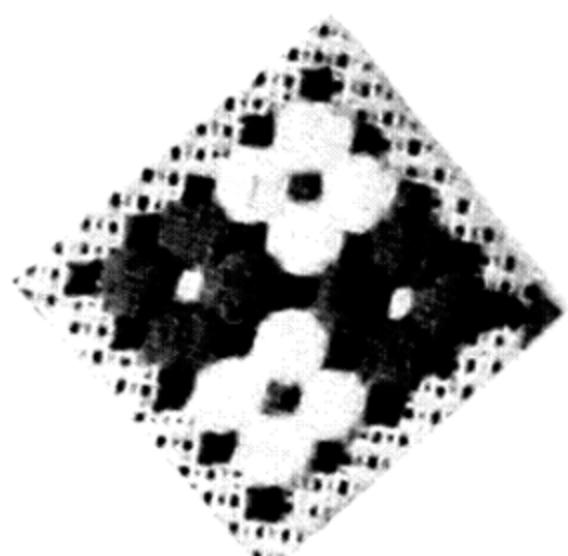
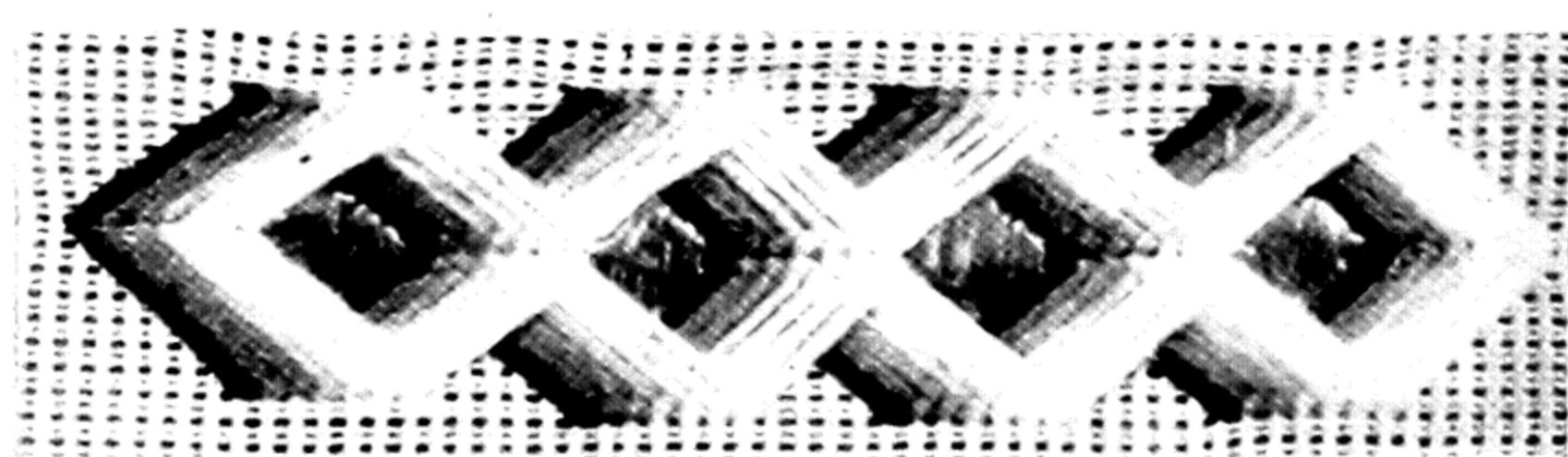
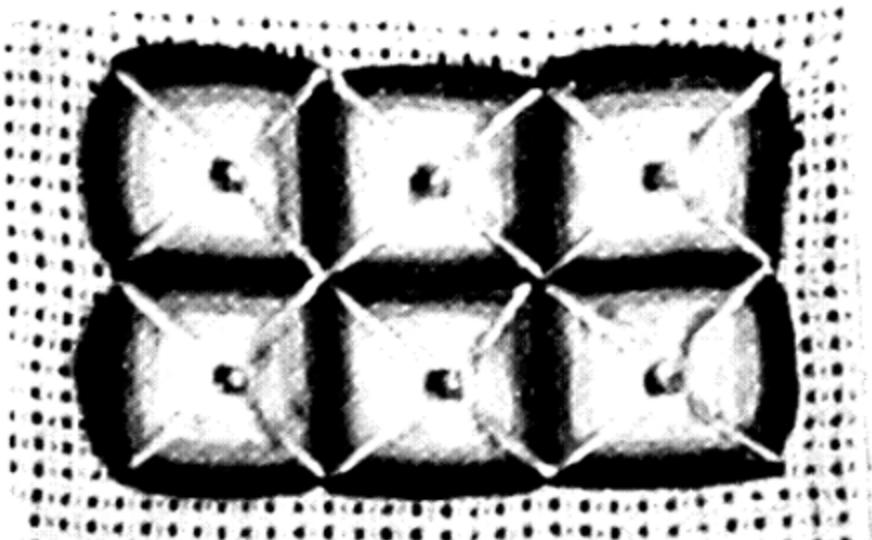




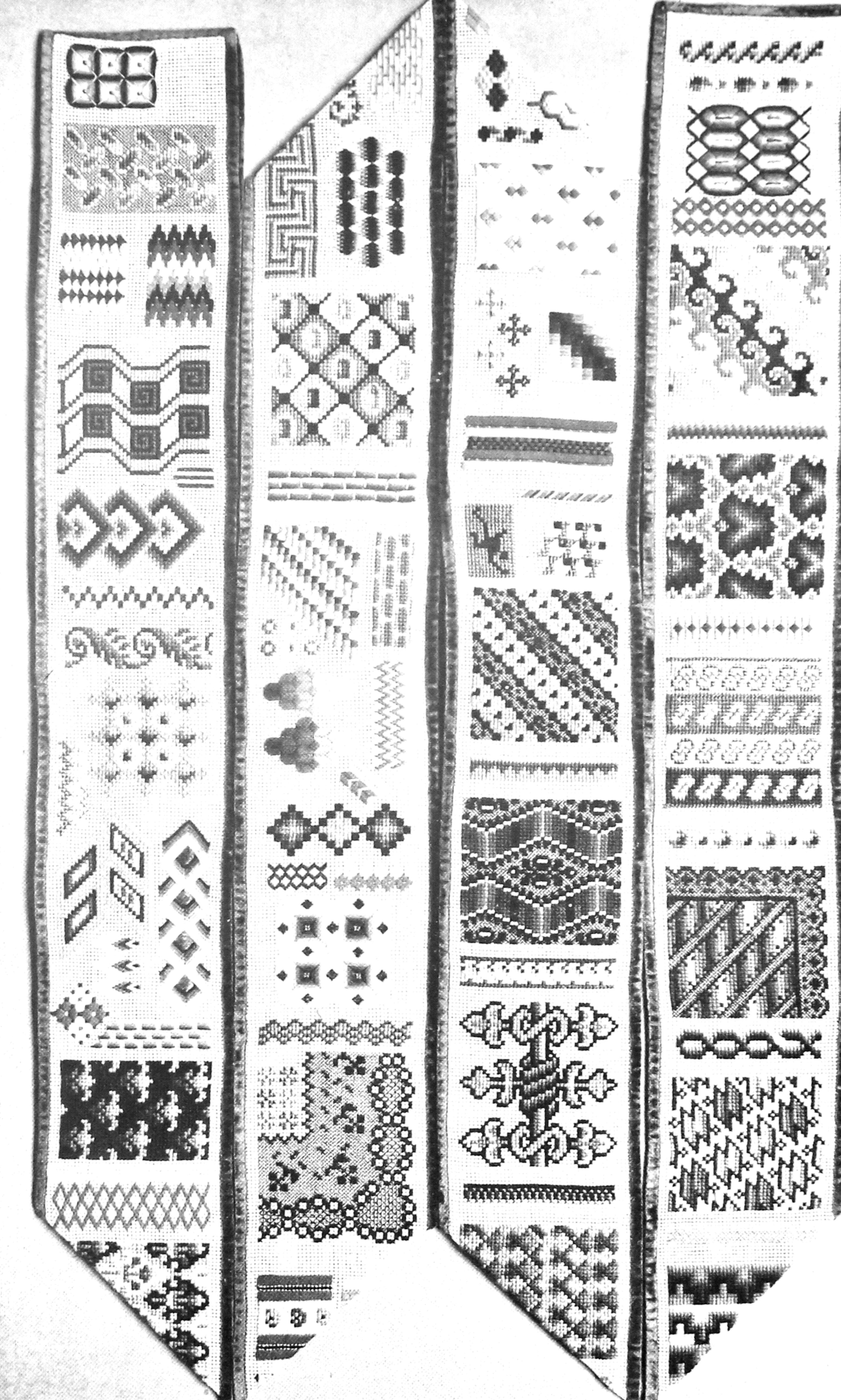
*Here and at the foot of this page are enlarged details from the sampler shown on the opposite page.*

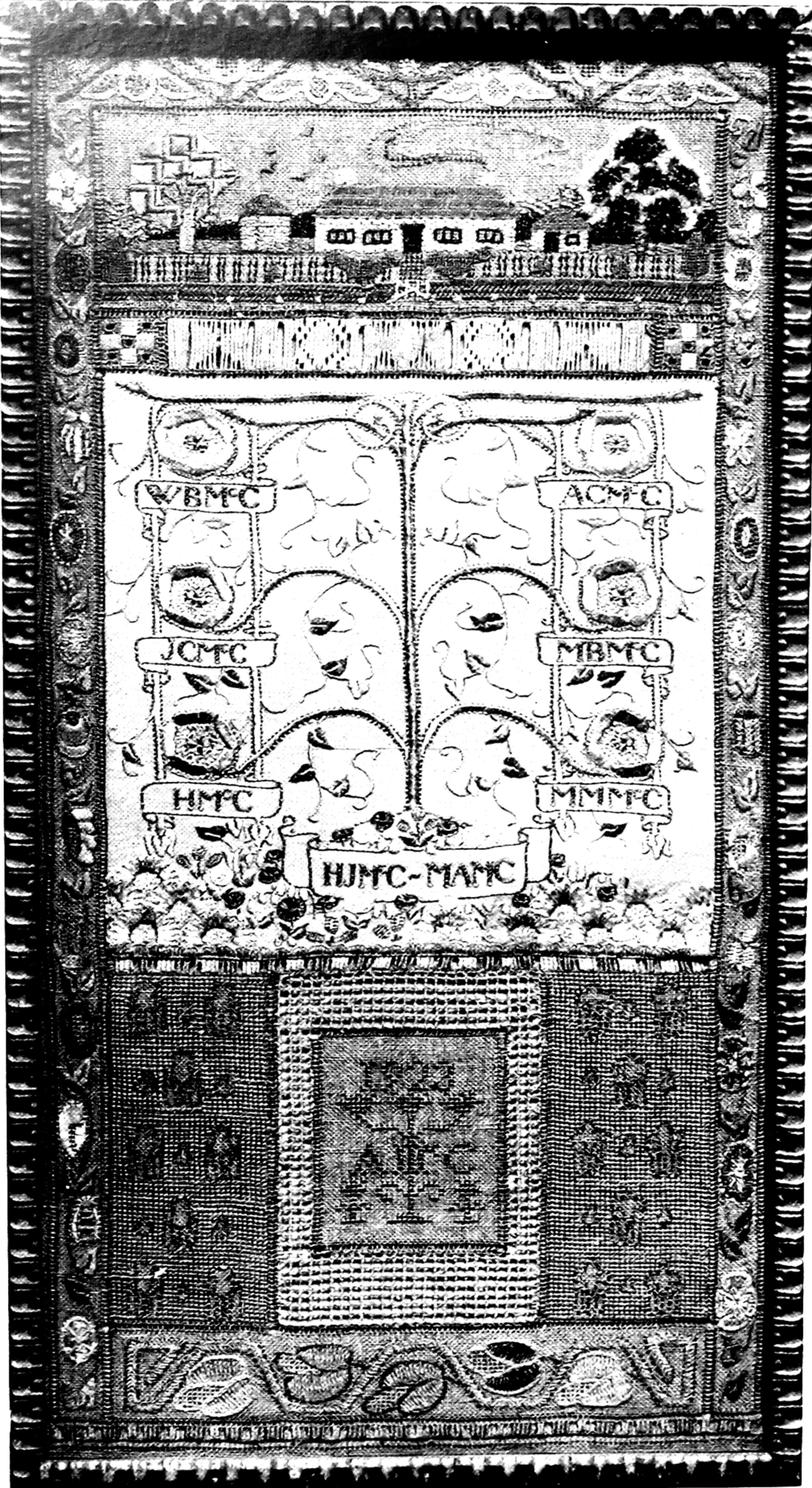
In the Victorian samplers we generally find the alphabet and a row of figures but, unless it is a moral sentiment or a verse, it is a house that is most frequently the central feature and a simplified drawing of even the ugliest of modern houses can be quite decorative if properly treated.

Whilst on the subject of samplers let me say that it is a very good idea for everyone to make what was the original form of sampler, namely a piece of canvas about 15 to 20 inches long, and 6 to 10 inches wide, on which a record can be made of every variety of stitch. These samplers are quite decorative in themselves besides being invaluable books of reference when one is considering what kind of stitch to use when starting a piece of work. The sampler should be made of canvas or of linen not too closely woven. If the mesh is fairly fine the smallest stitch can be taken, whilst by working over two, or even four threads the stitches can be increased in size. Wools or silk can be used or a combination of the two. Some interesting examples both ancient and modern are shown. In many early 19th century samplers beads are introduced with good effect and gold thread can also be used.

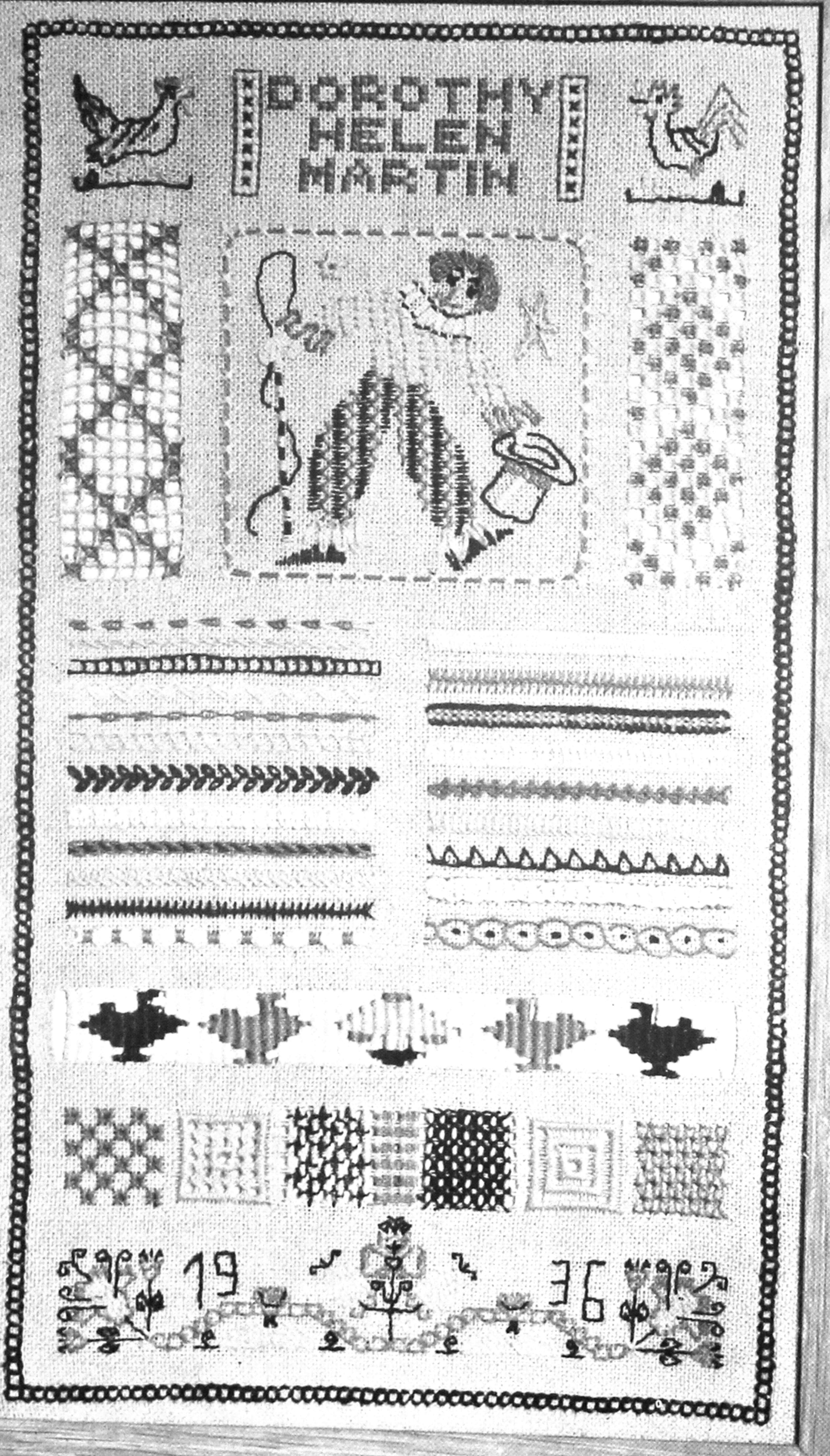


An English sampler of the early 19th century, in silk, wool and silver-gilt thread and metal-beads on canvas showing cross, long-armed cross, satin, herring-bone, back, brick, darning and Hungarian stitches with laid and couched work. From the Victoria and Albert Museum.

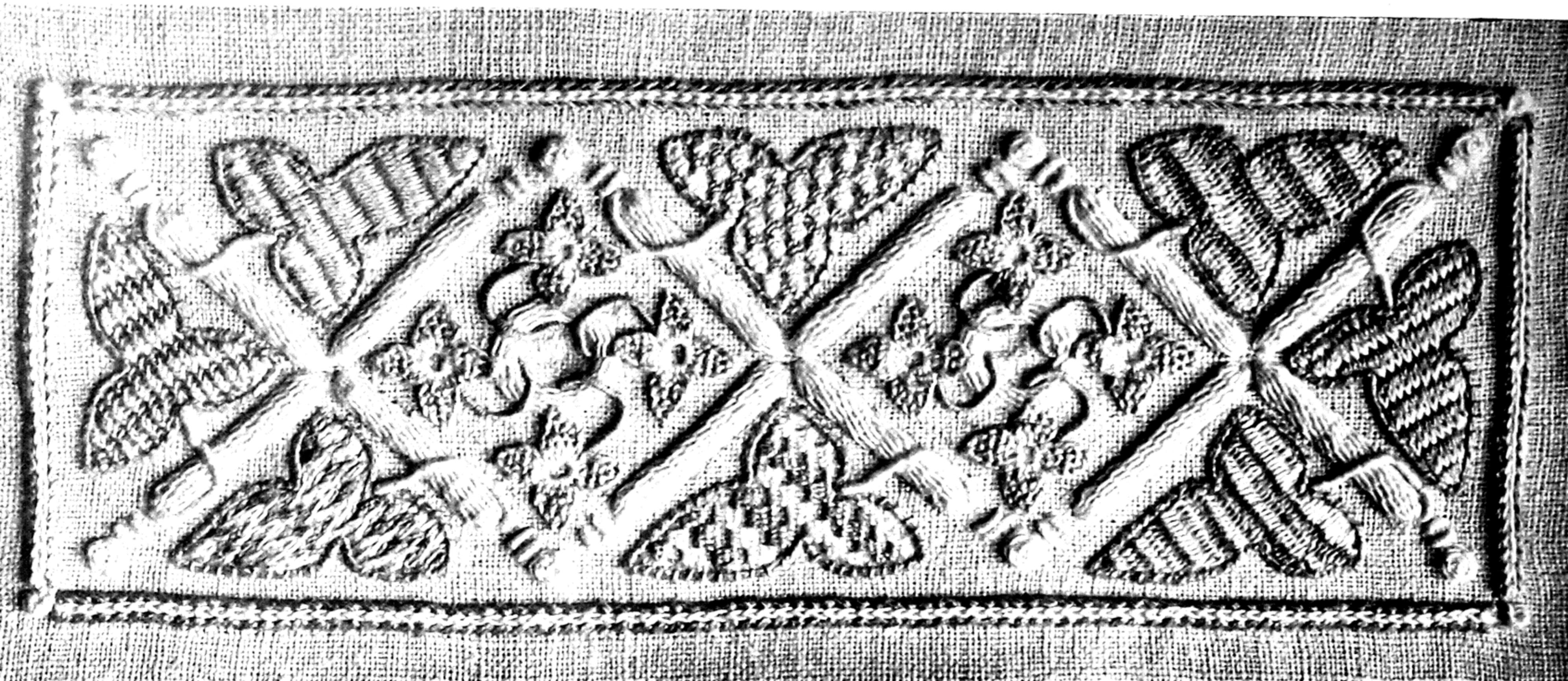




Sampler designed and worked by Agnes C. McCredie, in silk, with a variety of stitches.



*A modern sampler worked on natural linen with linen threads in yellow, red and black, showing cut work, line stitches, needle-weaving and infilling. Designed and worked by Dorothy Martin. Courtesy of the Glasgow School of Art.*



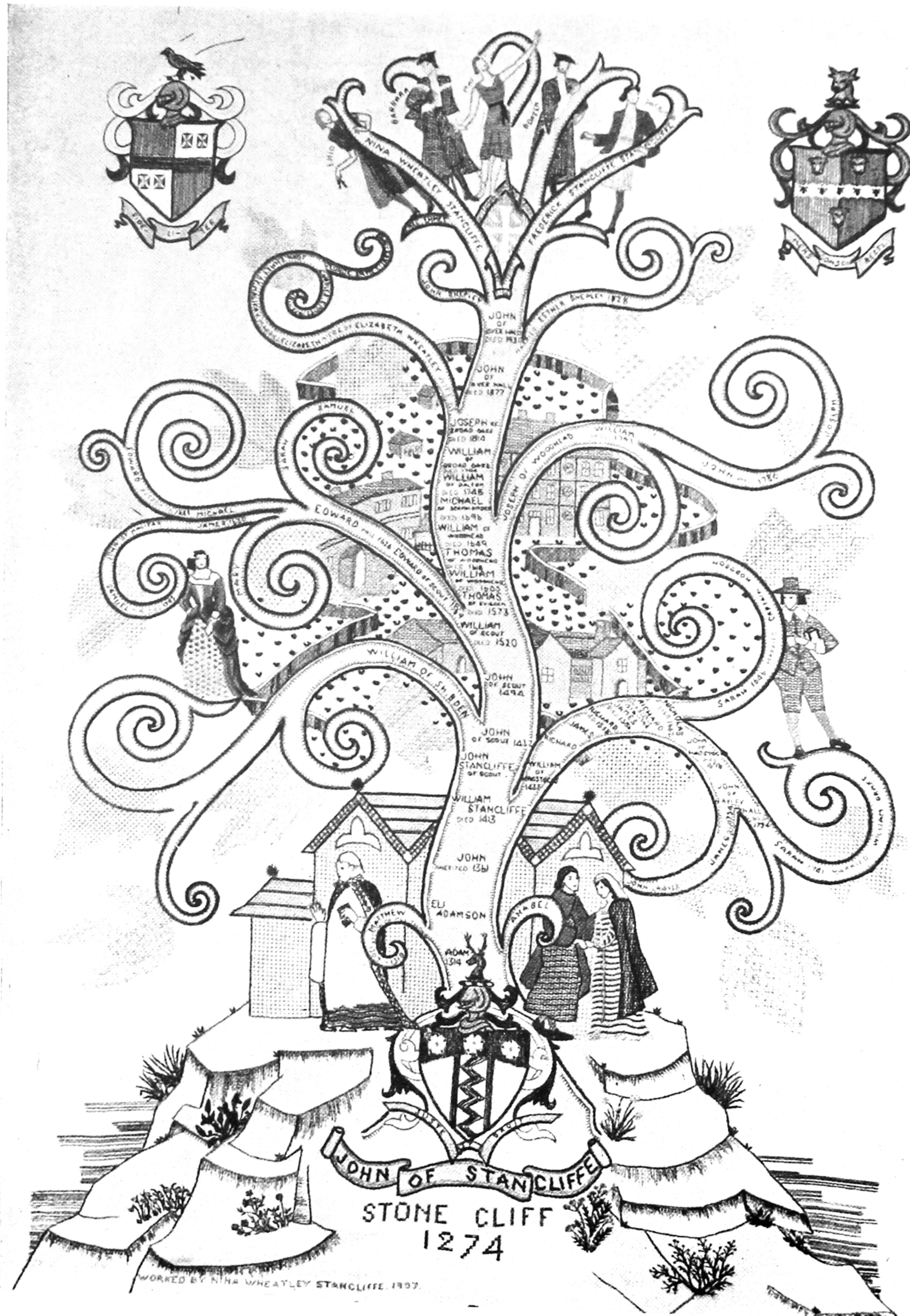
## THE GENEALOGICAL TREE

Akin to the pictorial sampler is the genealogical tree which can be treated much as the old "Jesse" windows were. The tree, rather in the style of the Jacobean or Palampore trees, spreads over the entire surface of the work, starting with the earliest known member of the family. Then the family literally branches out, and any object specially connected with any particular member of the family can be hung, like a Christmas tree ornament, on the appropriate branch. Crests and coats-of-arms can also be introduced successfully. Mrs. Stancliffe of Wilmslow has worked such a tree with very happy

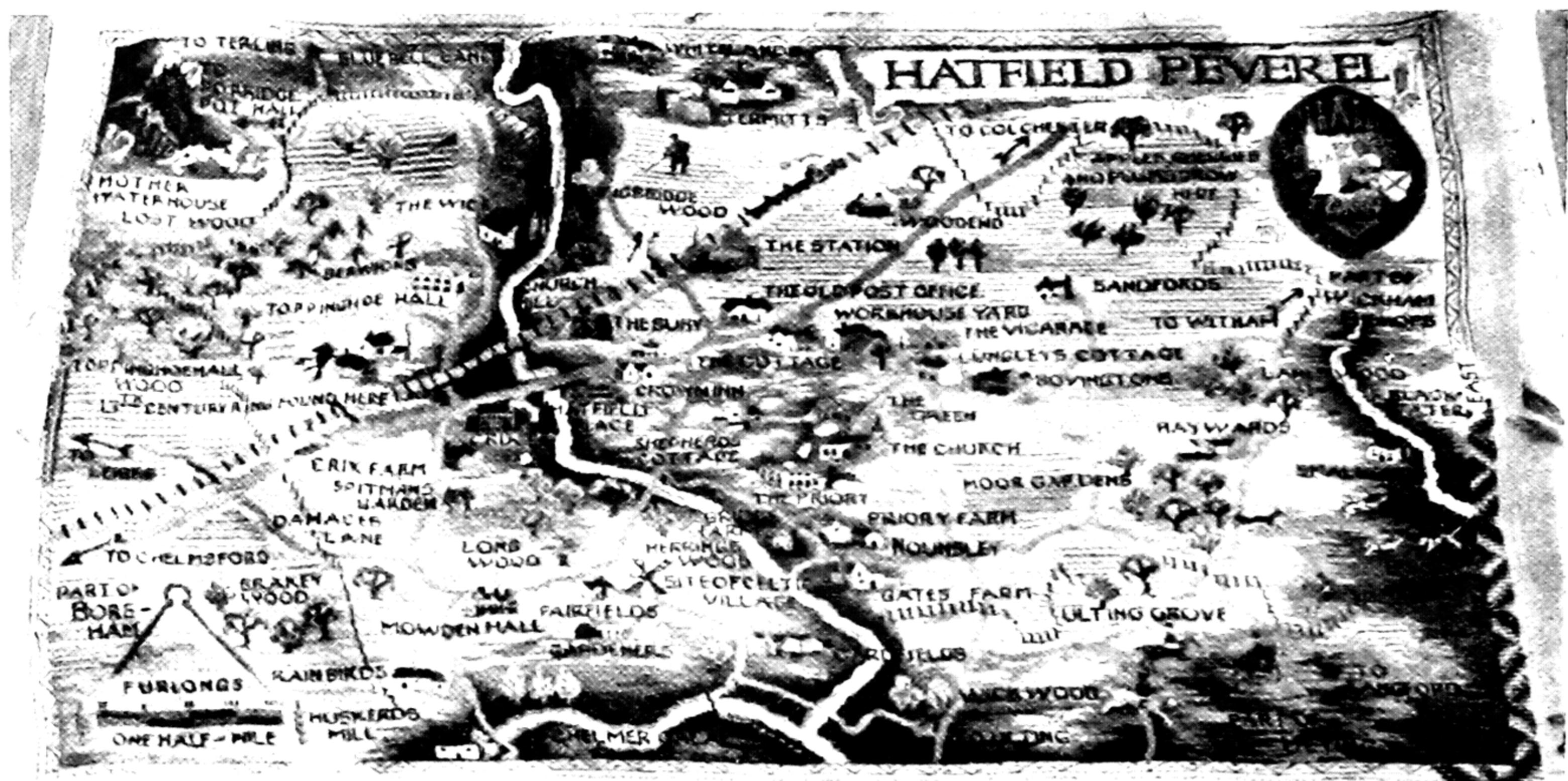
*The embroidered linen above shows a variety of interesting stitches that might be incorporated into a sampler. Courtesy of "The Connoisseur."*

Right :

*This embroidered family tree depicts various facts and incidents in the history of the Stancliffe family, whose surname is taken from a stone cliff or quarry still to be seen in the Shibden valley, near Halifax, Yorkshire. The Stancliffe coat-of-arms appears at the foot of the tree and the coats-of-arms on the left and right at the top of the embroidery are those of the Wheatley and Emmet families with which the Stancliffe family intermarried. The work is carried out on hand-woven linen embroidered with Pearsall's filoselle silks. The main stitches used are : Surface stitches : cable, chain, couching, cross, blanket, buttonhole, knots and brick and cross filling. Drawn thread stitches : window, Russian, rosette, oblique and chequer filling. Ware, Turkish, three-sided, squared-ground and drawn-buttonhole. Worked by Mrs. Stancliffe of Wilmslow, Cheshire.*



results, and the *stone cliff* from which her husband's family derives its name figures in the design, which is reproduced on page 35. Maps and ground-plans of houses and gardens also lend themselves to this kind of treatment and wall maps of the county were popular in the 17th century. These were usually in petit-point and the whole surface of the material was worked, but they can equally well be done more or less in outline, the trees being worked in French knots and many different kinds of stitches being used for the flower gardens and buildings. A study of the pictorial maps of Speed will suggest the treatment of the design.



*Embroidered map (unfinished) by Miss Tess Hope. Very fine tent-stitch has been employed in conjunction with a coarser, ribbed stitch, for the wide expanses of arable land. In one corner is the seal of the Priory with the Virgin Mary, in another the local witch and satanic attendant.*

## NEEDLEWORK PICTURES

Other forms of needlework pictures are worthy of mention. Miss Constable executes large historical portraits in a mixture of embroidery and appliquéd, the faces, hair and hands being carried out in long and short stitch, usually in wool, while the costumes are in applied material, velvet, silk or brocade being used. Real lace is added for the frills and ruffles, and jewels and pearls in relief give a rich finish to the whole.

Mary Ireland's mosaic pictures are different in that everything is suggested by a clever use of the rightly chosen material—a check pattern to indicate brickwork or a tiled floor, a gold material with wavy weave used for hair.

*This Colonial scene of 1837 is carried out in very small beads and has much the appearance of a cross-stitch panel with certain characteristics which give it a textile quality rather than that of a drawing or painting. The colours held by the beads are as permanent as mosaic, and the length of endurance of the work is only limited by the strength of the thread. (The original is the property of Miss Tess Hope).*





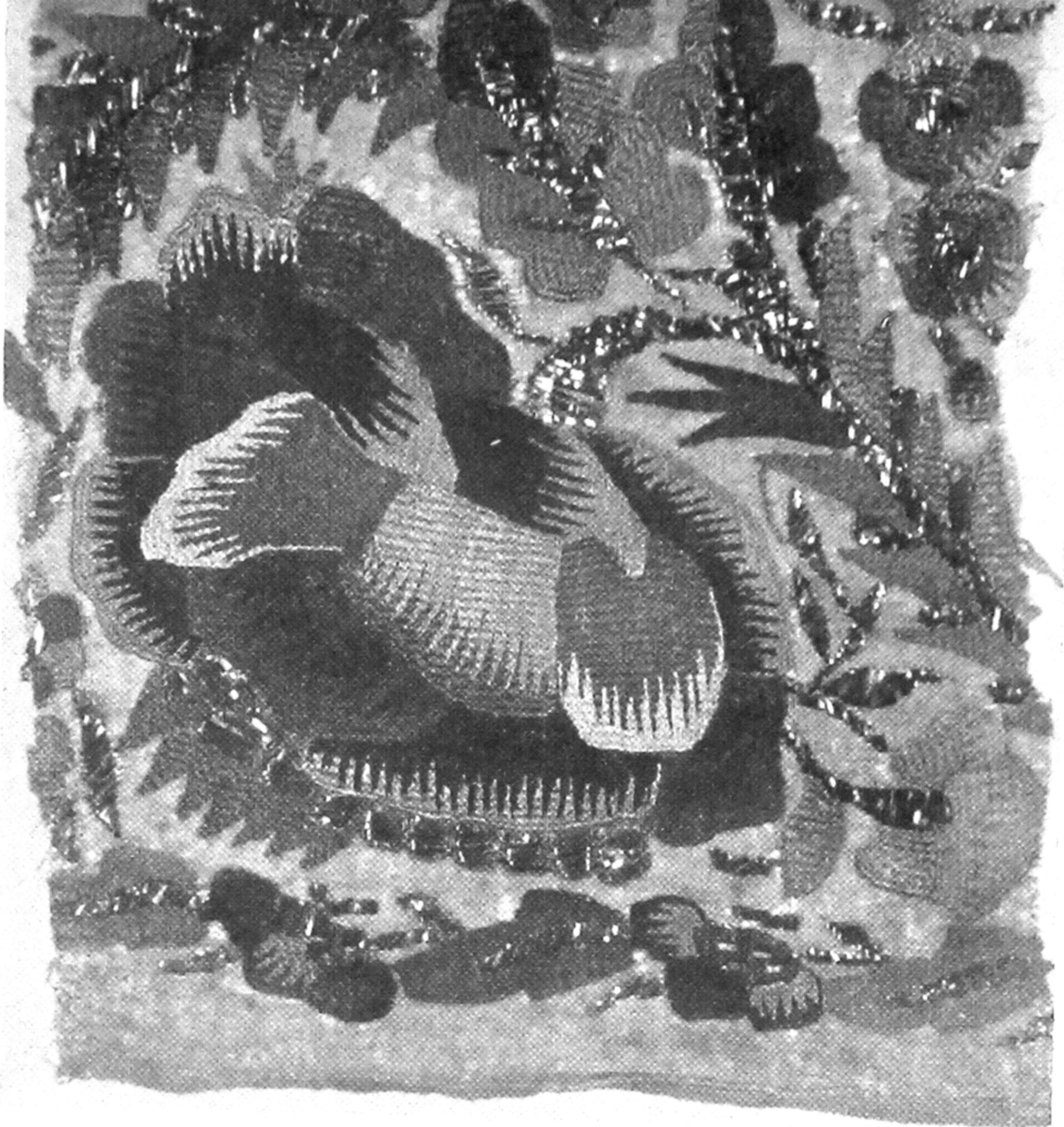


*An excellent example of Miss Constable's clever needlework portraits. Though most of the picture is in stitches of wool, lace, fur and jewels are superimposed to add richness to the whole. Miss Constable's work is on a large scale and her historical portraits would fill a whole picture gallery.*



The success of her pictures depends entirely on the ingenious way in which suitable materials are employed and she scorns the use of surface embroidery. This kind of work can well be adapted for ecclesiastical purposes such as banners and altar-frontals and the richness of the materials makes the complete article glow with splendour. Church hangings and furnishings should always be of the richest stuffs procurable except in the case of small white-washed chapels of simple architectural designs, when linens can effectively be used for appliquéd work. Some beautiful altar-frontals were formerly made in petit-point or Hungarian stitch and it is a pity that more use is not

*A detail of flower bordering from the Greek Islands, worked in double darning or 'Pessante,' and edged with a braid-like bordering with threads of various shades of pink and green and metal on a soft cream muslin-like material.*



*A panel for a chair, embroidered with wools on canvas. The flowers, as in many other French designs of this period (late 17th century) are more conventionalised than in the English pieces of the same date. From the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

*This screen in petit-point, designed and worked by the author, is suggested by a Dutch flower piece. The flowers are mostly in tones of red, while the background is shaded from maroon to a pinkish brown.*

*Below: A large floral and bird panel worked by Miss Tess Hope from a design taken from an Enghien tapestry at Angers (late 16th century). It is carried out mainly in tent-stitch, with gobelins and long-legged cross-stitch to emphasise constructional settings. Silk is used for contrast and depth.*



made of these stitches in modern churchwork. Beads can also be used very decoratively, and there is a beautiful frontal in the Victoria and Albert Museum in which the design is carried out entirely in coral beads sewn closely together, combined with embroidery of silver thread. I have confessed to a prejudice against needlework pictures, but by that I really mean landscapes or figure subjects which, when finished, give the effect of watercolour paintings. The Japanese are most expert in this form of work—forests and waterfalls



*Opposite : This petit-point pole-screen in the possession of the author is dated 1734. The design is rather more conventionally treated than is usual in these subjects, while the 'hill' on which the basket stands suggests the rocky ground so frequently seen in the 'Palampores', or curtains of Jacobean work.*

being amazingly well imitated in silk embroidery, but I always consider these panels or screens, made for export, to be more astonishing than artistic.

### THE FLOWER PIECE

I have also seen petit-point copies of Dutch flower pictures so skilfully imitated that at a distance one can hardly see the stitches, though these again strike me as being wrongly utilised, though as a *source of inspiration* nothing is better for needlework (particularly for panels such as fire screens), than an old flower-painting. But it is the *spirit* of the picture that should be aimed at and not the letter. Many beautiful pieces of work have been inspired by old



flower-prints such as were found in the 18th century botanical books and some of these pieces are reproduced on pages 45 and 46, whilst on page 49 will be found some illustrations of the flower-embroidery of Mrs. Douglas MacLagan of Comrie who combines accuracy of draughtsmanship with originality of treatment in quite an individual manner. If these flowers, exquisitely drawn though they be, had been carried out in solid embroidery to imitate the flowers and the leaves as in a painting, half the charm of the work would have disappeared. One of the advantages of studying the 18th century needlework is to learn to what extent flowers can be conventionalised without losing their character. We study these old pieces of work as an art-student studies the old masters, without the wish to imitate them, but only to some degree to imbibe their spirit, and just as the young painter may learn by copying a part of an accepted masterpiece, so it is very advisable for the needleworker to copy quite accurately a leaf or a flower from the best pieces of old needlework ; but *as a means to an end and not as an end in itself.*

### THE MANAGEMENT OF SHADES

The mistake so many beginners make lies in not knowing how many shades of silk or wool to use, and beginners in cross-stitch usually err on the side of using too few. Heavy blocks of one colour should be avoided and it will be noticed that in the old work at least five shades of the same colour are introduced in the working of a single leaf. But these colours should always be carefully graded tones of the same colour except when a decided accent or contrast is aimed at. The veins of a leaf can, of course, be of an entirely different colour. Another mistake that beginners make is that of not sufficiently covering the groundwork with pattern. A small design on a sea of one coloured background has a very poor effect and large empty spaces of background should also be guarded against between the flowers and leaves. This, of course, only applies to cross-stitch and petit-point. In these every stitch has to be worked, so they may as well be of decorative value. Study the old pieces and notice how little background there is compared with the design itself.

### ON BACKGROUNDS

As the colour of the background is bound, even in a well-covered design, to be predominantly conspicuous it is as well to decide upon that before embarking on the work and to work the flowers in colours that will harmonise with the background. Alternatively all the pattern can be done first and the groundwork last, but in that case it will usually be found that the choice will lie between black (or more probably nigger-brown) and an equally neutral colour.



This section of an early 17th century panel worked in silks on canvas suggests various ways in which flowers taken from the botanical books of the period can be conventionalised. From the Victoria and Albert Museum.

*Another section of the early 17th century panel shown on the previous page. From the Victoria and Albert Museum.*





*Detail from an early 18th century English coverlet. Chain-stitch in wool on linen. The flower here is purely conventional.*

## THE STUDY OF DETAIL

A study of other types of work such as "Spanish work" or the Jacobean will show how frequently and effectively the general shape or outline of a flower or a leaf can be purely naturalistic whilst the filling up of the inner spaces can be treated in a variety of quite fanciful patterns. Not until the old pieces have been closely examined and their treatment thoroughly digested can the designer hope to produce a workable sketch for an original piece. It must never be imagined that a thorough knowledge of old design will have a stultifying effect upon the originality of the modern worker; quite the reverse. A study of old stitchery will fire the imagination and suggest a hundred

*Panel — "Flowers."*  
*Appliquéd, using various contrasting materials and line-stitch. Designed and executed by Agnes C. McCredie. From the collection belonging to the scheme for Needlework Development in Scotland.*



new ways of treating an ancient craft. To invent an entirely new stitch is practically impossible, but what makes modern work exciting is a novel combination of old stitches coupled with something contemporary in the way of design.

### *NEW PRECEDENTS*

A very original tray that I recently saw was made of pieces of net superimposed on net and worked with all the usual lace stitches. Bits of satin were applied here and there and white cord made a couched outline in the modernistic design. The whole thing was carried out in white and mounted under glass on a background of silver foil. In another needlework picture also executed in white on a net background, bone curtain rings and pearls were sewn on, and white baby-ribbon was used for the couching.

*Detail from a large coverlet worked in silks of naturalistic colours on pale yellow silk. The colours of the petals of the pinks are suggested by delicate stitchery, the ground not being entirely covered. Worked by Mrs. Douglas MacLagan of Comrie, Perthshire.*

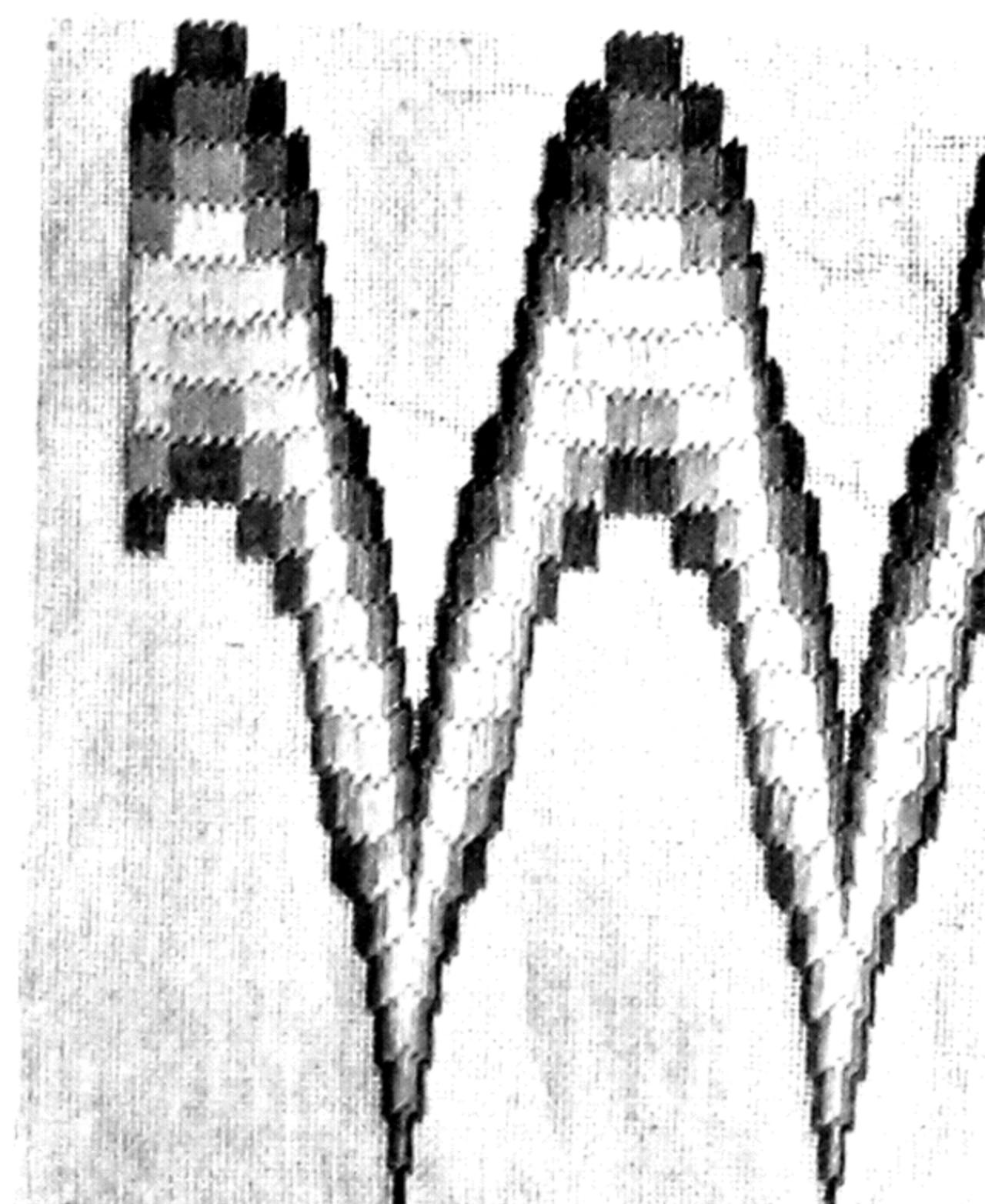
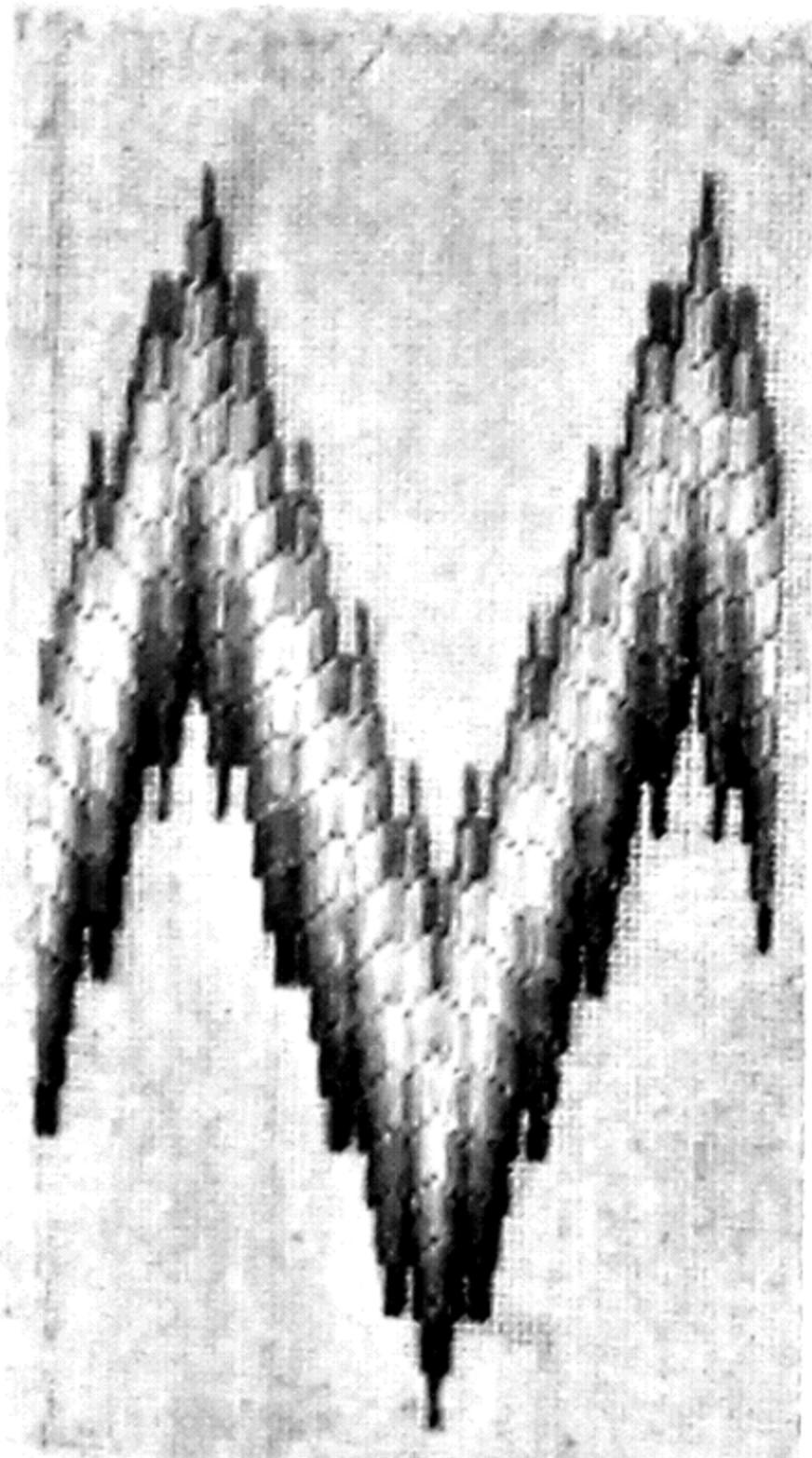
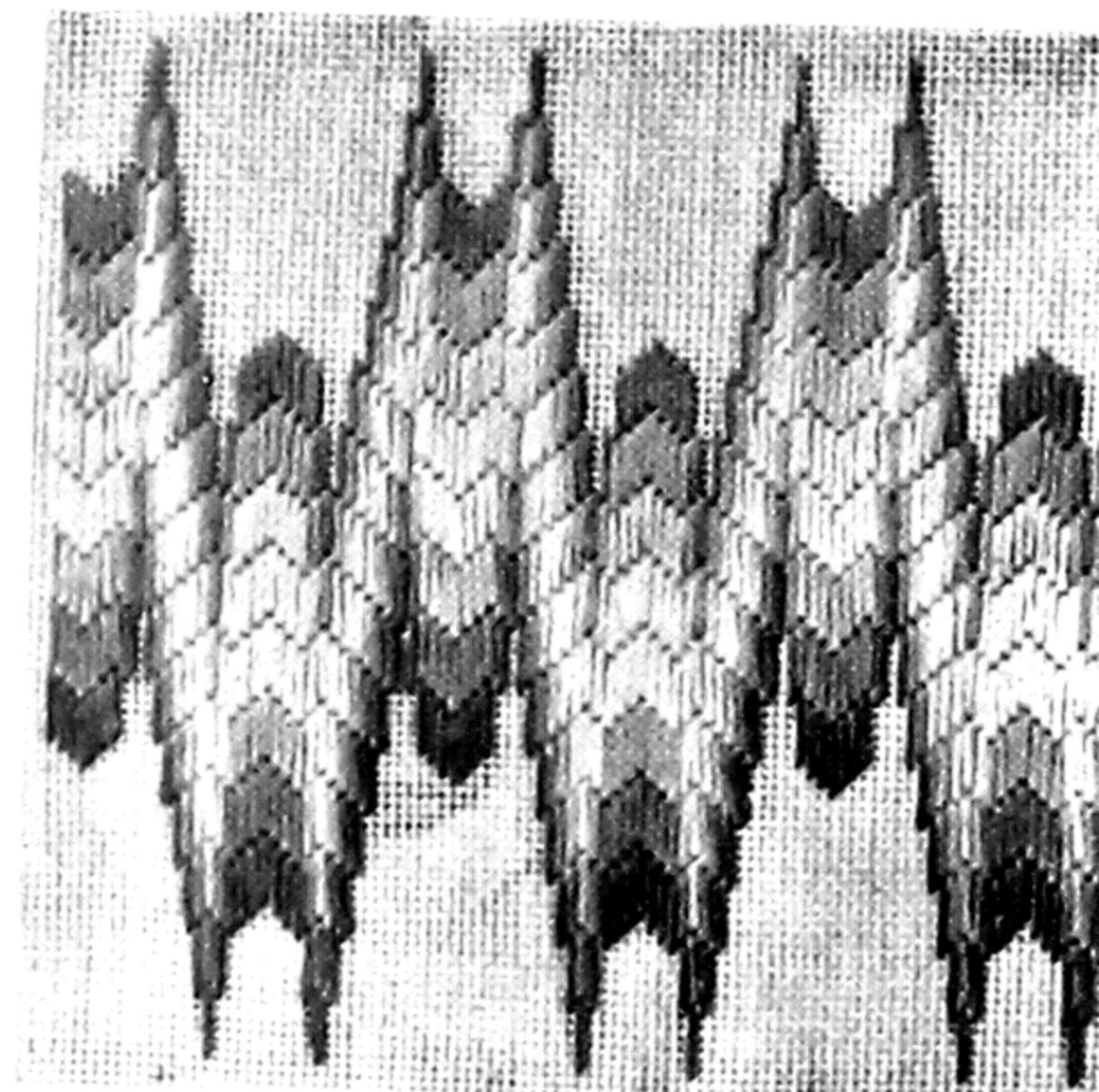
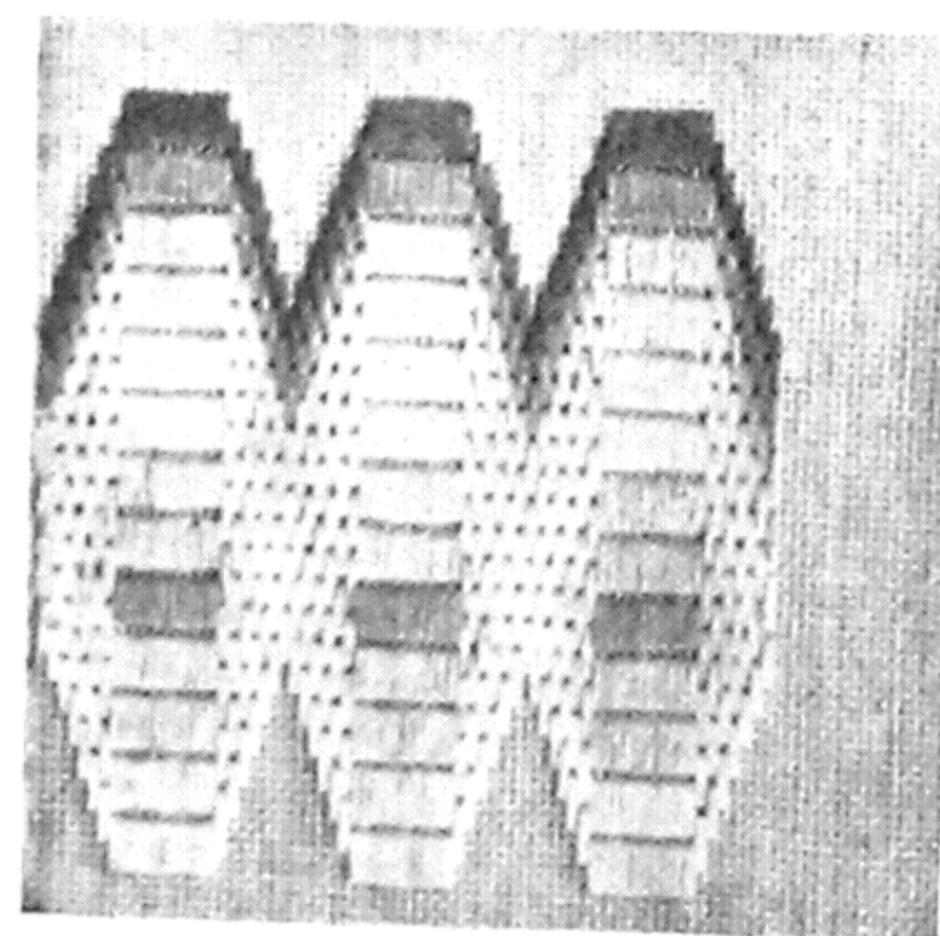
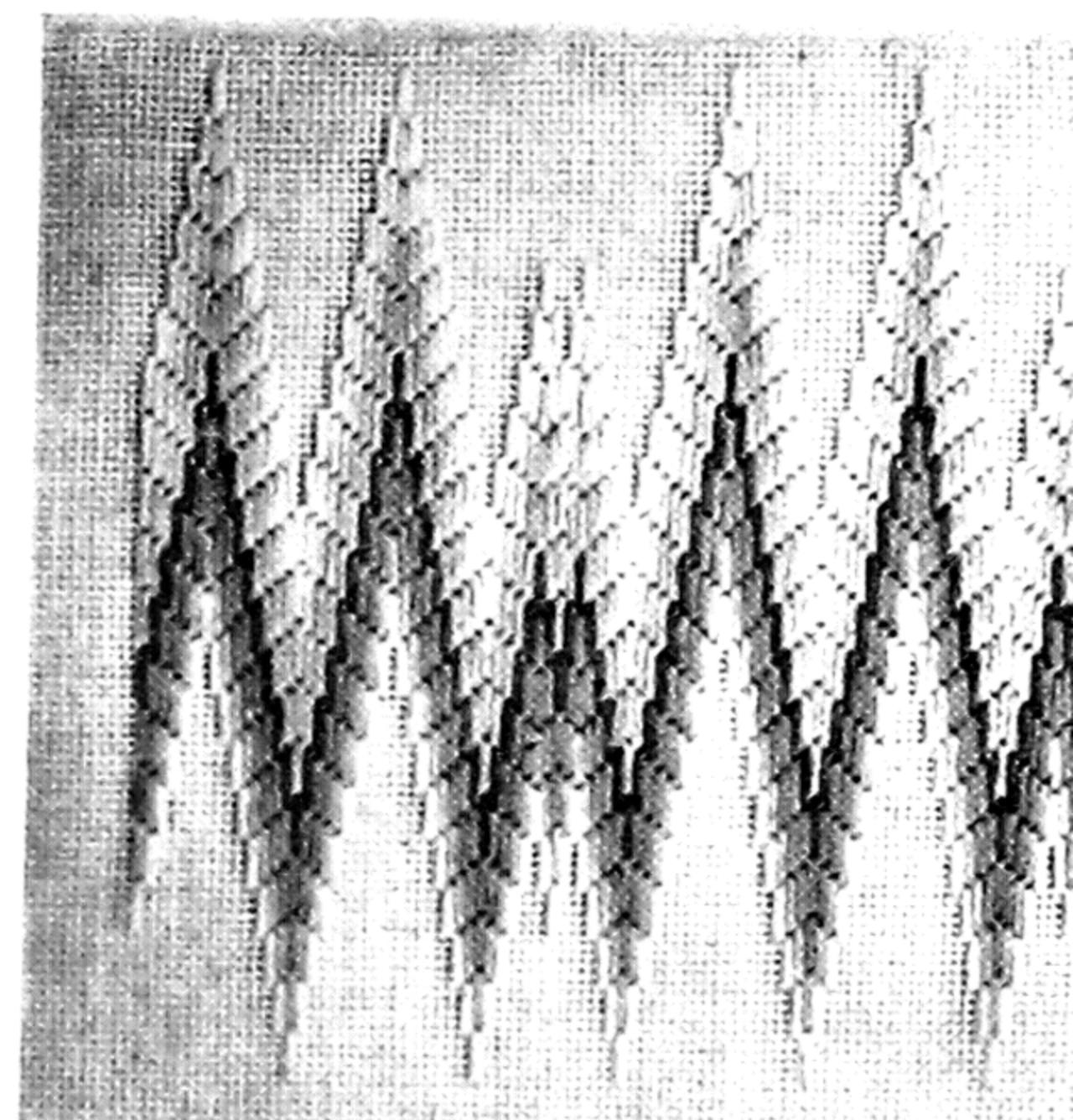
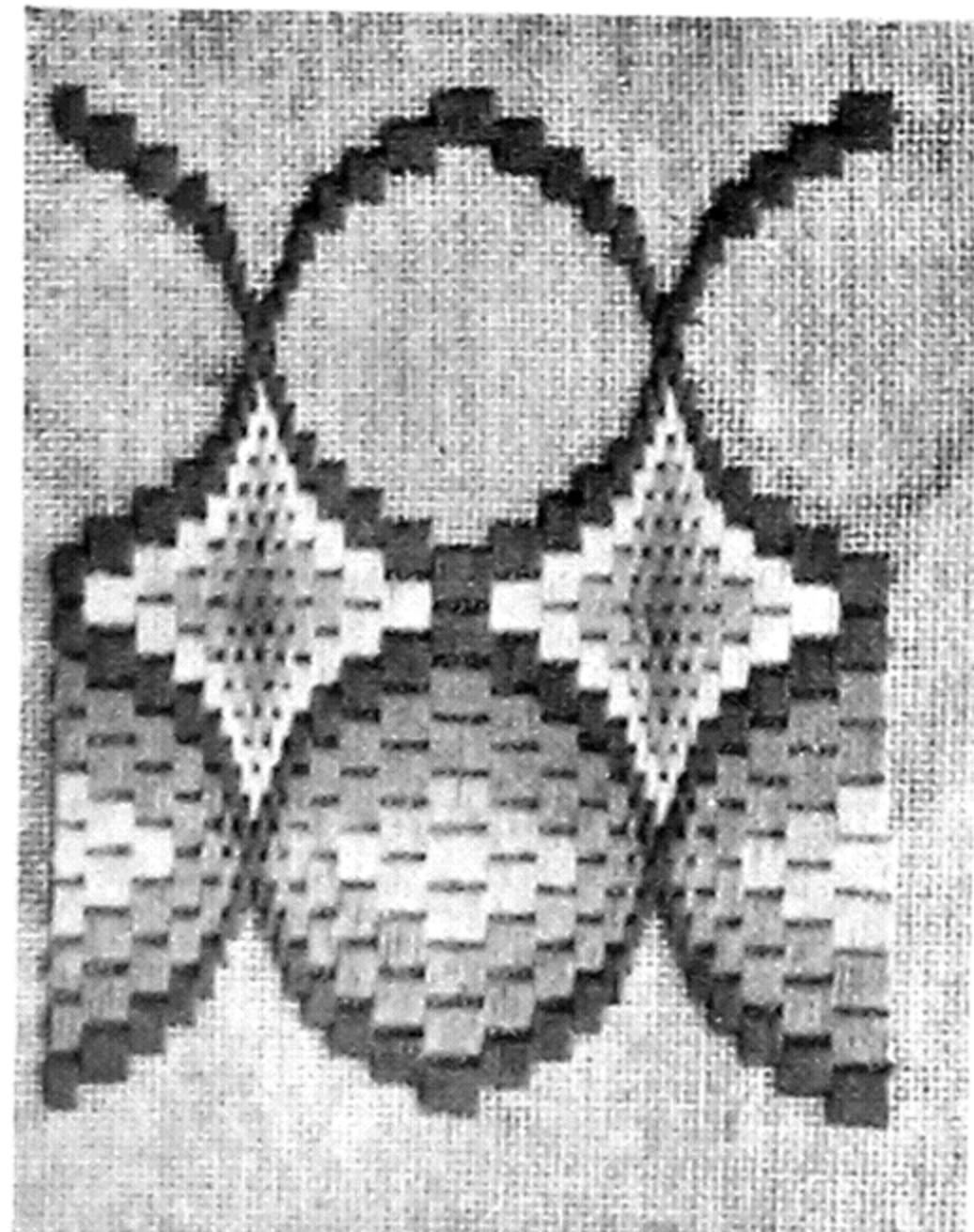
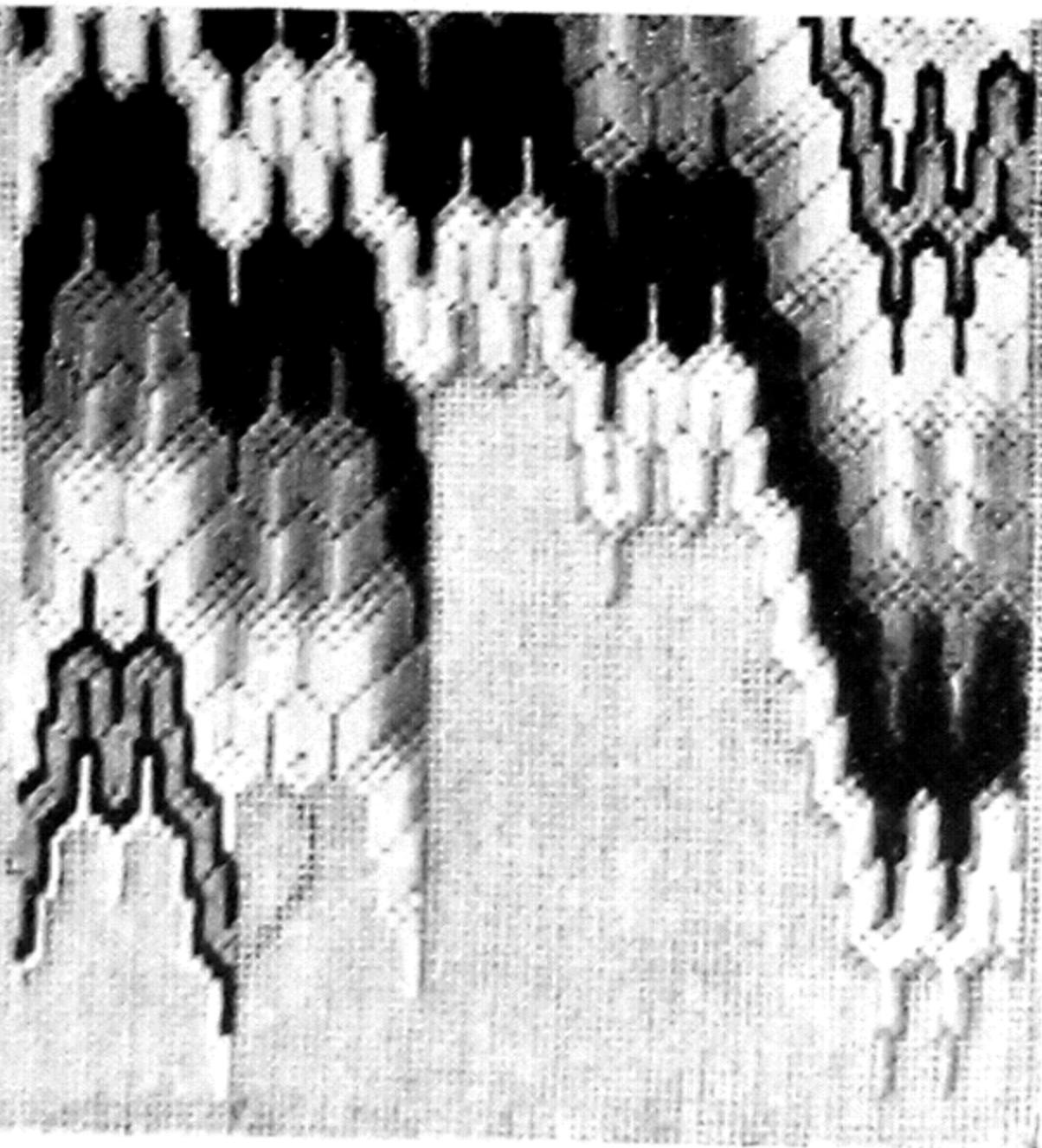


*Nasturtium detail worked for the same coverlet. Here again the pale yellow background is not entirely covered, the colour of the leaves being suggested by lines of delicate stitchery.*

We have now considered, fairly comprehensively, work intended for framing, but large pieces of work which need not be glazed can also be produced without being necessarily very laborious to make. As I have suggested, appliquéd work lends itself to large hangings better than any other method and can be extremely effective. The materials used must be suggested by the room in which the work is to hang ; the other draperies in the room should also be considered. If the curtain and the other draperies of the room are of rich stuffs, velvets and silks should be used for the appliquéd panels ; whereas in a simple country room with linen or chintz curtains a more modest material would be suitable. The choice of materials will also suggest the kind of design that would be appropriate. Velvets and satins lend themselves to a brocade pattern of conventional design, whilst linen can be used for more floral or pictorial treatment. A frieze of Noah's ark animals or characters from a fairy tale would look very well in a nursery, on linen not more than 24 inches wide. Couched in black filoselle or wool, it would, with its flat, bright colours suggest a stained glass window. Felt, leather and American cloth are all excellent for appliquéd work and have the advantage of not fraying so much as some other materials. Artificial silk, for this very reason, should be avoided like the plague—it frays abominably—and even silks, satins and velvets are best pasted on to thin paper before being cut out, except when used for curtains or cushions (for the paper, however, thin, destroys the flexibility of the stuff and prevents it from hanging properly.)

### *THE VALUE OF COUNTERCHANGE*

A counterchange design is sometimes used for borders or for long, upright panels, the part of the material cut away being the same as that which is left, which reverses the pattern. The two pieces can be fitted together or applied separately on to a different background, the latter method being the easier to work, as the join in real counterchange inlay is not easy to cover unless a rather wide cord or braid is used. Hungarian or "flame-stitch," also known as Bargello work, looks as well when used for hangings as it does for chair or cushion-covers, because the shaded colours used (and flame-stitch is always shaded), can so easily be made to tone in with the colour-scheme of the room. For hangings as shown on page 54, a violently spiky "thunder and lightning" design is the most effective, whilst on smaller articles the wavy line, which is the chief characteristic of this work, can be moderated. The pattern is easily evolved as once the first line has been decided upon the others simply follow it. The materials for this work are canvas with silk or wool, or, most effectively, a combination of the two, the lightest shade of the range of colour used being in silk and the other lines in wool. The stitch is a plain



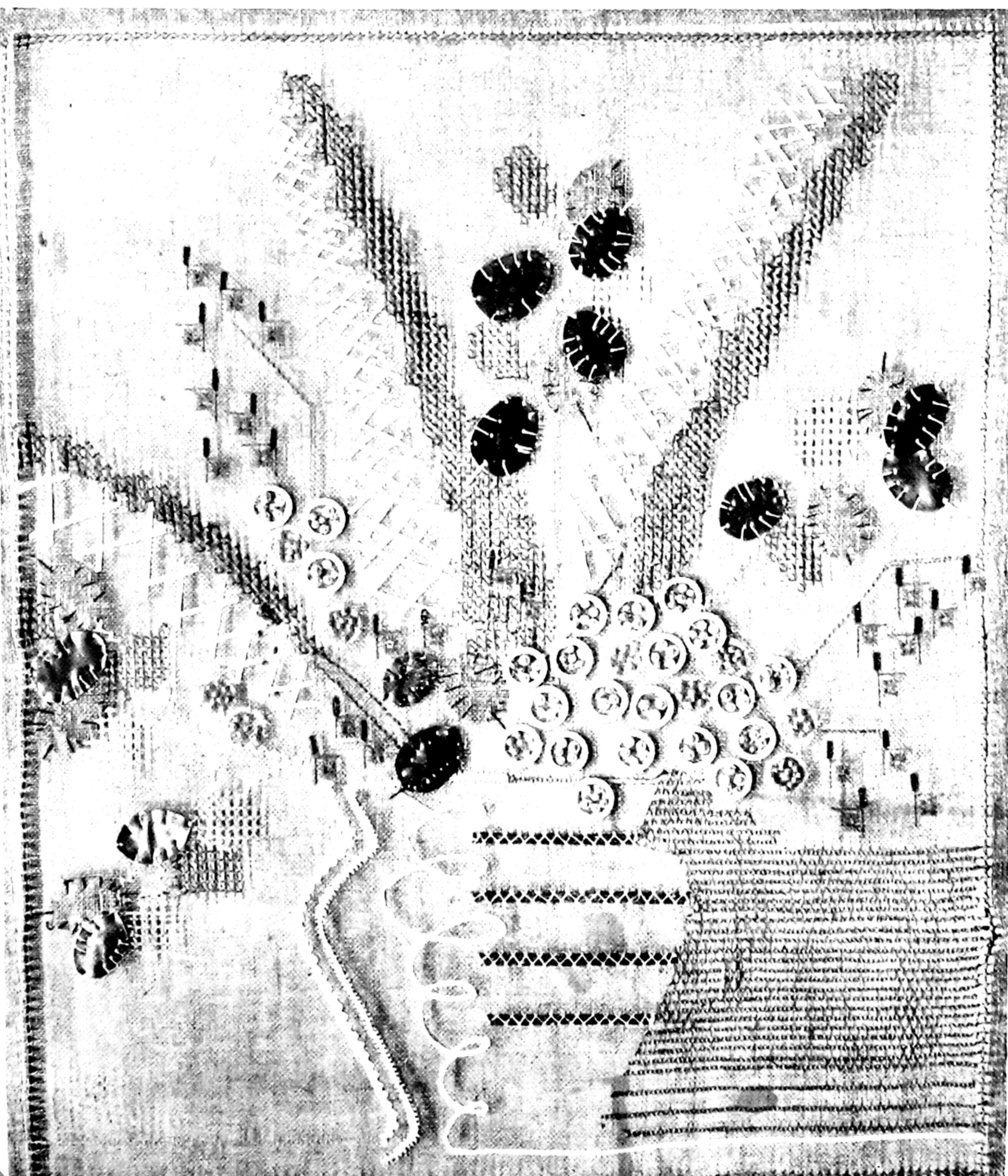
The illustrations here demonstrate quite clearly the variety of designs that can be made in Hungarian stitch. It will be noted that a single meshed canvas must be used for this particular kind of work. From the Victoria and Albert Museum.

perpendicular one worked over four or six threads of the canvas, the next stitch beginning two threads above or below the last, unless a gentler curve is needed in which case three or four stitches must be worked side by side. The samples shown should make this perfectly clear.

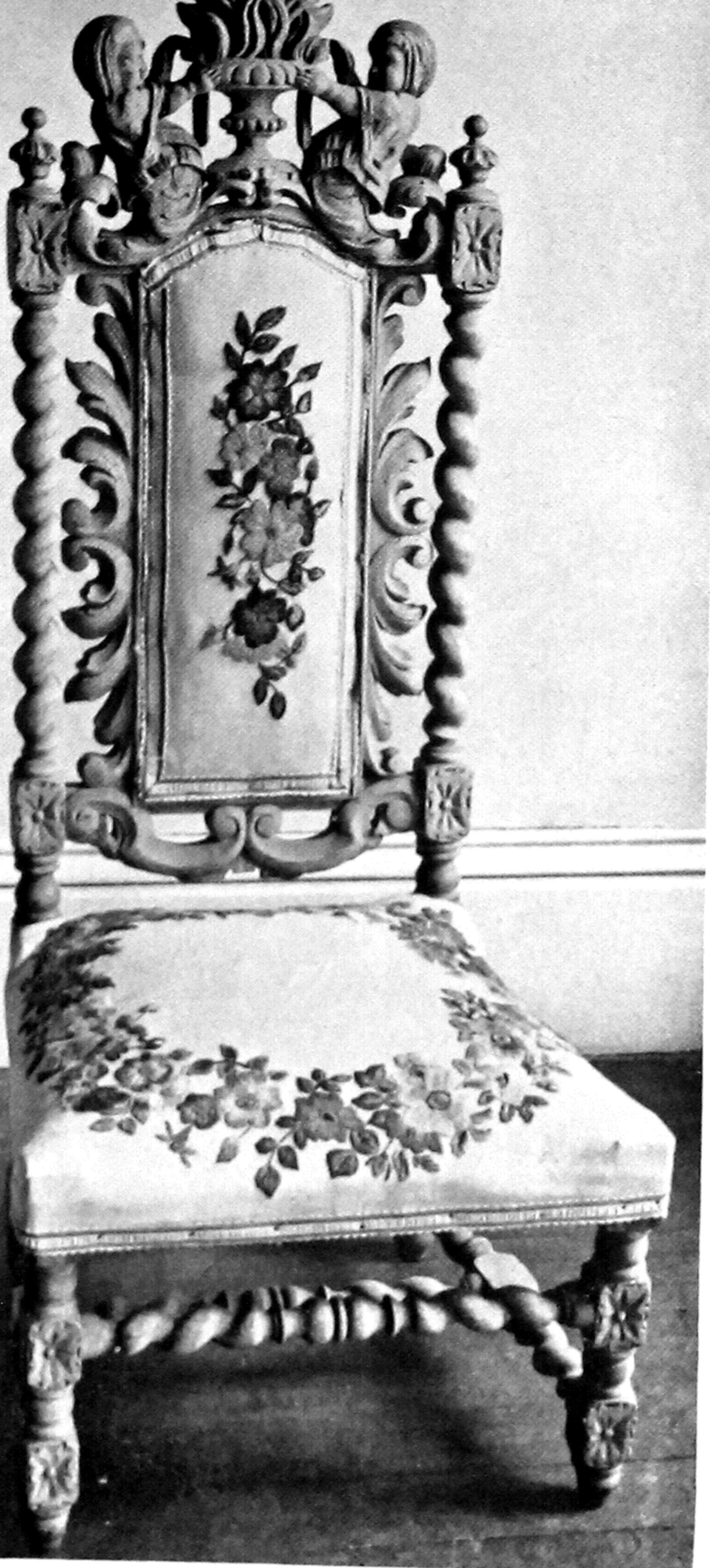
There are many other designs suitable for Hungarian stitch besides the usual "thunder and lightning" pattern. A shell pattern is effective or the wavy line can be reversed to include a lozenge-shaped form on which a small flower can be worked. Plates on page 51 show a variety of Hungarian stitches. The advantage of this kind of work is that once one section of the work has been decided upon the rest of the design is inevitable and easy to complete.

### *LOOKING BACK AND FORWARDS IN MATTERS OF DESIGN*

In working chair-backs or seats the style of the chair should of course be carefully studied, a Chippendale chair having a floral pattern *suggested by*, though not copied from, a contemporary design. It is fashionable nowadays



*This very original needle-work picture of Honesty and other flowers is carried out chiefly in drawn-thread work on lawn. Ribbon, curtain-rings and discs of metal are sewn on to represent the various flowers. Worked by Miss Mildred Lockyer.*



*Chair seats and backs worked by Mrs. "Pongo" Barker in long and short stitch. The wreath has been adapted from a border in an advertisement, whilst the design in the right-hand illustration was inspired by a Victorian book-marker. The chairs themselves, picked up for ten shillings each, were of the sticky polished variety, but are now seen after a vigorous pickling treatment.*



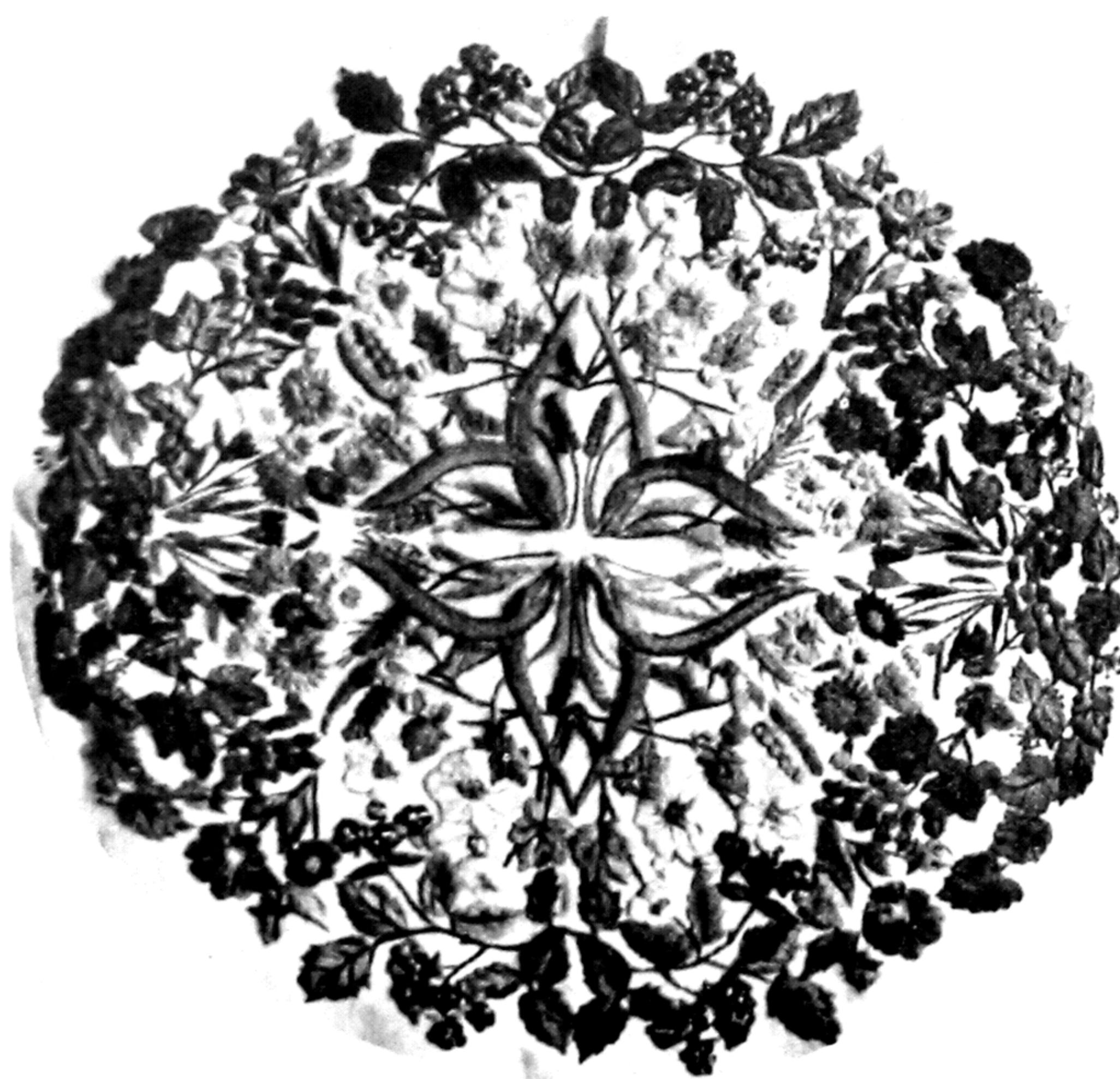


*This illustration shows how effectively a panel of Hungarian stitch can be used as a wall-hanging between the windows. The colours used should harmonise with the general scheme of the room.*

*Top right : Miss Hebe Cox's Cupid has a faintly Victorian flavour, but it is served up in a thoroughly up-to-date manner.*

*Lower right : Chair-back, mainly in long and short stitch, worked by Mrs. "Pongo" Barker from a design by Joyce Bunting. It presents a group of Autumn subjects, with blackberries in French knots, stems in stem-stitch and corn leaves in double stem-stitching.*

for gilt or painted furniture to be stripped to the plain wood, though this, we hope, would not be done in the case of a genuine Chippendale chair. Louis XVI chairs lend themselves to this process perhaps better than others, though personally I think it is a pity to remove really good old gilding. A French

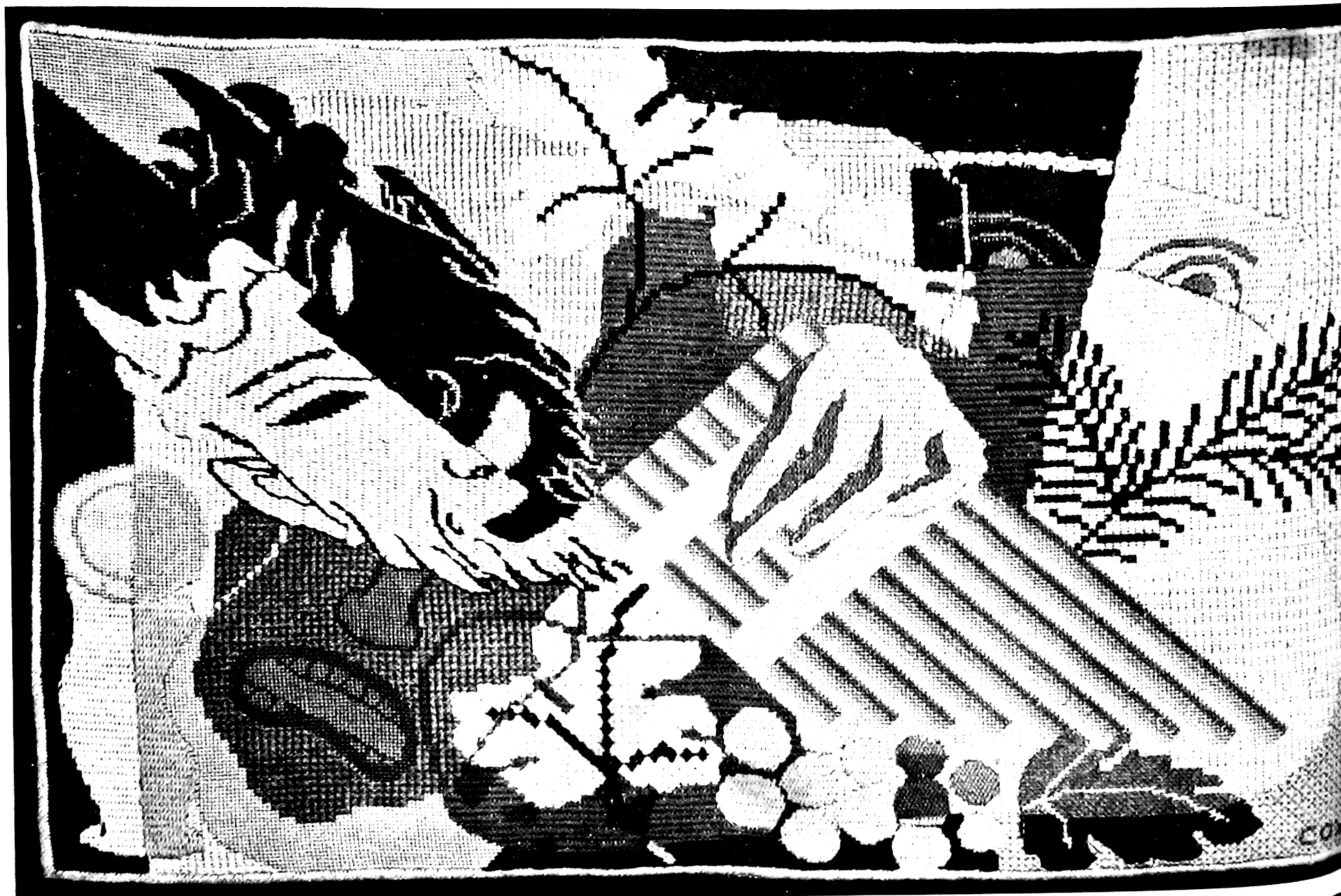


18th century design carried out in monochrome, that is in shades of white toning to beige and brown, would look well on a stripped chair, especially in an "off-white" room, but the background should be worked in some strong colour, such as coral-pink, blue or jade green according to the other fitments of the room.

Many chairs have no particular style to limit the imagination of the worker and on these, modern designs would be permissible. Some examples by A. H. Williamson and Hebe Cox will be found among the illustrations included in this book, and Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell have also made various abstract designs of this kind, but in carrying these out workers should not confine themselves to cross-stitch or tent-stitch as these are too conventional and orthodox for anything so revolutionary. A free combination of chain-stitch, double-stitch, French-stitch or double cross-stitch is much more suitable for abstract designs.

### *FITNESS OF DESIGN TO PURPOSE*

Here I may as well stop for a moment to explain that the object of this book is to suggest what sort of designs are appropriate to different articles of furniture and to give, perhaps, a few hints on how these designs may be pre-



*Mr. A. H. Williamson* in this design escapes from conventionality and even from tradition, but his patterns are eminently suitable for modern furniture in modern surroundings. His colour schemes, too, are original—he uses chocolate-browns, grey-greens, mauves and salmon-pinks.

*Opposite:*  
Here Miss Hebe Cox is more definitely modern. And she wisely does not limit herself to cross-stitch, but varies her texture with a variety of different stitches, which is, I think, the correct way of treating a modern design.



pared. I have not set out to teach individual stitches and in case I have mentioned any that are not familiar by name to the worker, I have referred the reader in the early pages, to some books which will make the technicalities of the stitches quite clear and simple.

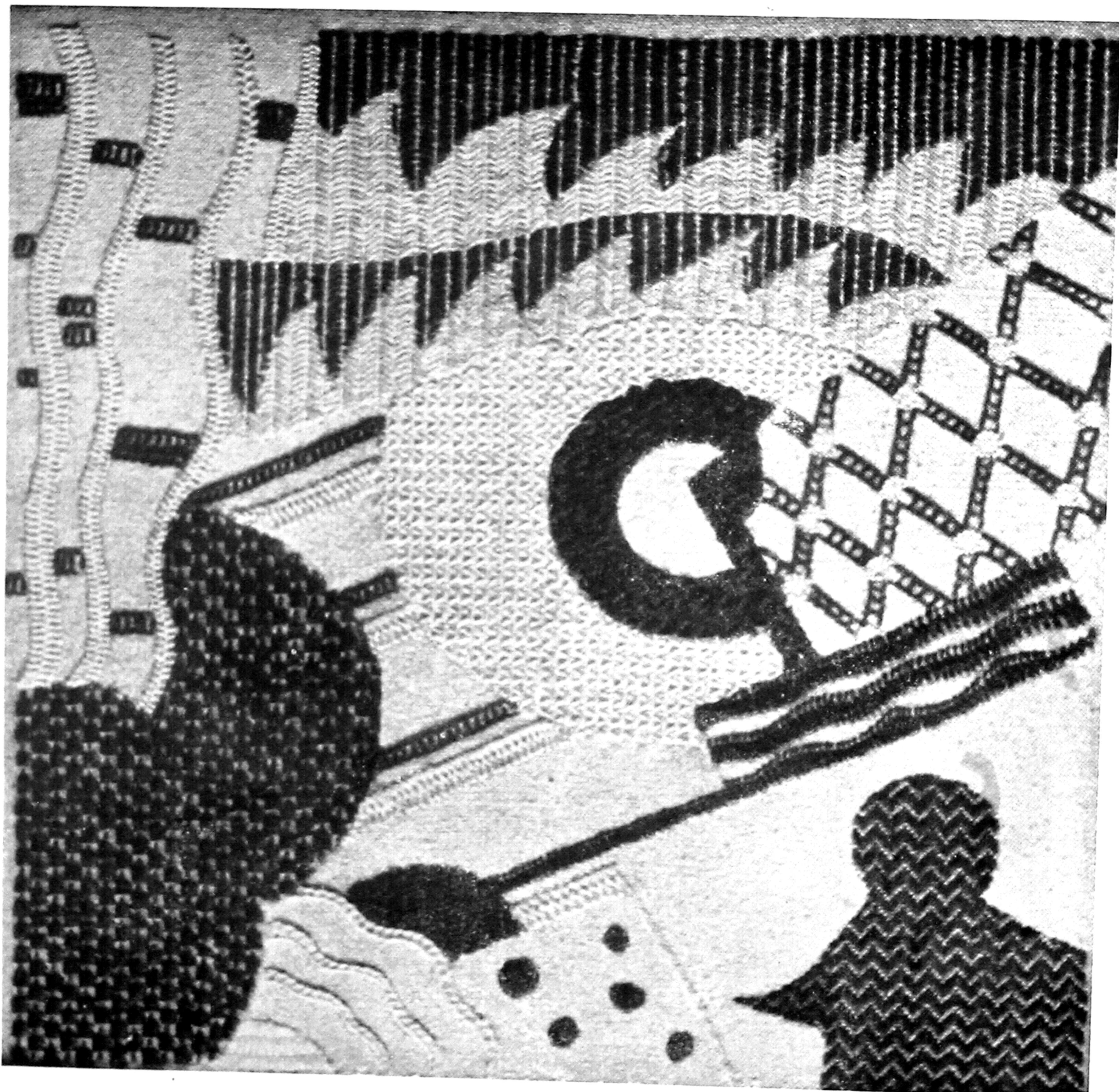
Beginners in cross-stitch usually prefer a double or Penelope canvas, but this is apt to make the work when finished rather hard and unyielding, so the sooner that double canvas is discarded the better. Moreover, on a single

canvas the gros-point can be varied by bits of petit-point, which is not so easy to manage on Penelope canvas. For large pieces of work, such as carpets and wall-hangings, I prefer an Arras which is the only material that I know, wide enough to obviate a join. It can be obtained 60 inches wide, which is enough for most pieces of work.

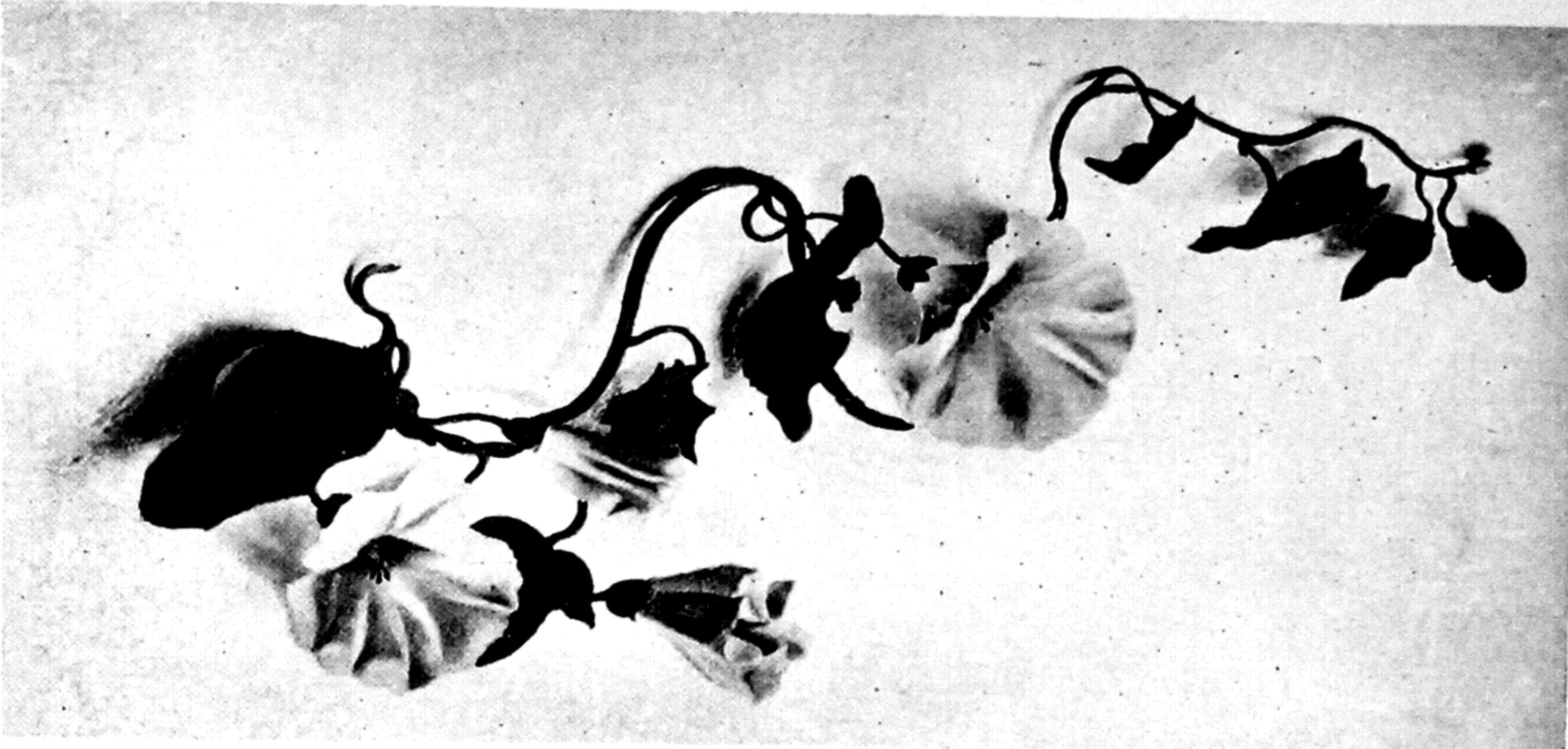
When first tackling a floral design for a chair or firescreen it is a good plan to make a rough copy of an old piece of work indicating the flowers with a round shape of an approximate size. When the rough sketch has been made, try altering the flowers, substituting one flower for another, for instance putting a rose where the original design had a tulip or vice-versa. The more delicate flowers such as lilies-of-the-valley can be replaced by forget-me-nots. In this way the grouping of the bunch, which is most important, can be adhered to, but a little inventiveness can be used in the actual placing of the flowers. After utilising this method it will soon become easy to make an entirely original design for oneself. As I have said before the great mistake that amateur designers make is that they do not cover the work sufficiently with the design and this method will help to teach the suitable spacing of a pattern. If the designer is not very expert it is a help to study the treatment of flowers in well-designed chintzes or cretonnes, which will be of great assistance in showing how the colours on a flower or the shading of a petal can be tackled. It must be remembered though, that in a printed chintz the number of colours is limited, whereas in needlework the grading of colours can be much more subtle. Be sure, when designing a bunch of flowers, to remember the imaginary source of light. That means that all the flowers must be lighter on one side, the left, let us say, and that the flowers on the left side of the bouquet must also be lighter in tone than those on the right. This prevents the bunch looking flat. In working a wreath of flowers the lightest point would be the top, and each individual flower would be darker on the underneath side.

**REFERENCE TO THE FOUNTAIN HEAD IN FLOWER DESIGN**  
Though I have advised a study of old pieces of needlework and chintz, the ideal way to design a flower piece is, of course, to study real flowers. A careful

*Opposite : Two border designs by A. H. Williamson.*



*Abstract design. Worked with wools on canvas, using darning-stitch, chain-stitch and Cretan stitches. Designed by John Crawford of the Glasgow School of Art, and worked by Mrs. Sinclair of the Dumgoyne Women's Rural Institute.*



*A realistic water-colour drawing of bindweed on the one hand, and a cross-stitch version on the other which is a transitional stage between realism and pattern.*

drawing should be made of some particular flower and then another drawing made treating it more decoratively, that is by eliminating the non-essentials of the flower to subject it to a conventionalising formula. Leaves must be treated in the same way and care should be taken that they have as much variety of form and colour as the flowers. There are many ranges of green in the needleworker's palette and the same range should never be used on too many of the leaves.

For small pieces of work a drawing should be made and coloured so that the final effect can be visualised. For larger pieces it is enough to make a black-and-white design and to put it on the floor or on a table and then to distribute hanks of wool all over it until a pleasant colour scheme is evolved. Then make a note on the design of the colours selected.

Needlework books always give an easy method of enlarging a design, but a better plan is to decide first upon the full size that the work is to be and then to reduce the oblong or whatever the shape may be to a convenient size for making the required design and then to enlarge it back again on to the work. By this means the correct proportion of the work is inevitable, whilst if the other method be used the design may be of the requisite height but the width



*These woodcuts serve to show the latent strength so often contained in a small design, which is well under the power of eye and hand, and which can only be appreciated when accurately enlarged. The enlargement of small embroidery motifs is often surprising in its effectiveness.*

may be wrong. It may seem too obvious to be worth mentioning but in making a design it is usually best to start from the centre. In designing a border with corners, make your corner designs first then the border can easily be made to connect them. If the border is designed first it is sometimes difficult to evolve a suitable corner, though the use of a double mirror is a helpful trick.





*Top : A bedhead cover made to slip over the woodwork. This is embroidered in various tones of yellow thread ; the thickness of the thread also varies. Chain-stitch, buttonhole and interlacing stitches are among the many employed. It was designed and worked by Rosemary Brownlie of the Glasgow School of Art.*

*Right: Polish woodcut, by Edmund Bartłomiejczk, entitled "Peasant Type from Jaworowo." (An illustration from "Wood Engravings of the 1930's"—Studio). A work such as this suggests an embroidery in which the directional value of stitches is uppermost.*





*Cockatoo, by Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.* The workmanship in this beautiful cockatoo is worthy of the best Japanese embroidery. How exquisitely the feathers are treated! And how cleverly is the rest of the work made subservient to the main interest of the design by the judicious use of wool instead of silk.



"*Work in the Fields.*" Designed by Peter Brooks of the Glasgow School of Art. Worked in wool on fine tweed with chain-stitch and infillings, by Mrs. Lamont of the Dumgoyne Women's Rural Institute.

Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt's designs are full of vigour, and the black-and-white Temple-monkeys opposite make a striking pattern. The flowing tails of the little animals cleverly fill the spaces.



EBR 1935

# DESIGNING

for the future

## SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

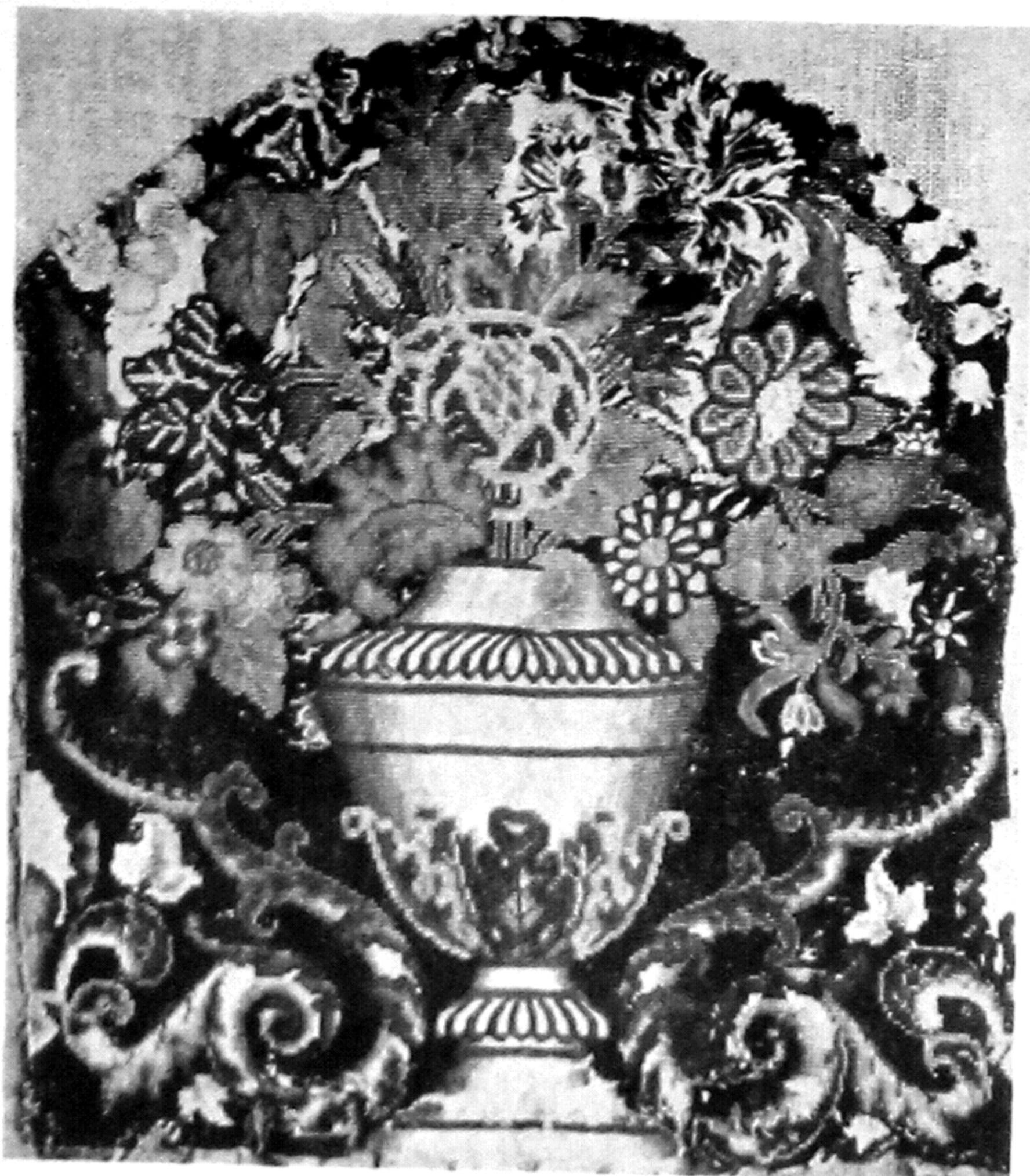
So far we have confined ourselves to showing the kind of work that was done in the past and to suggesting how the old designs can be developed and adapted for more contemporary use. Now let us ride our fancy on a looser rein and see what other and more modern sources of inspiration we can discover, for merely to reiterate the old designs takes us no further and is only stultifying to the imagination ; moreover, because a thing has not been done before it does not follow that it cannot be attempted and very successfully carried out by some adventurous spirit.

Even a very casual survey of the work done in the past will show how often a vase or bouquet of flowers figures in the design, as for example in those illustrated on the opposite page, but these flowers have a definitely ‘period’ air with a conventionally family resemblance to each other, whether it is a piece of needlework or a carving such as the delightful panel by the great Grinling Gibbons.

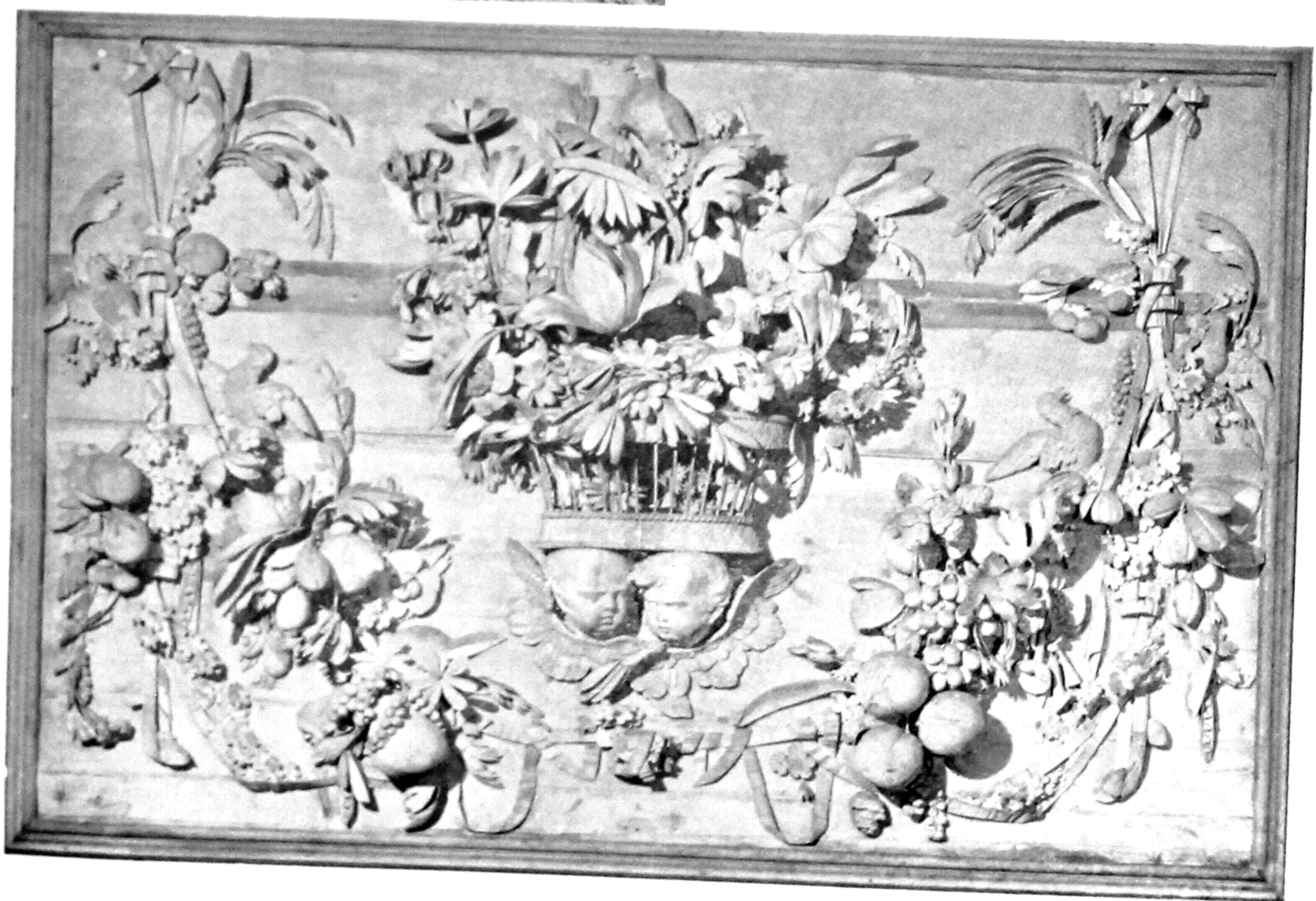
## FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

Now look at some modern arrangements of flowers on page 68, and it is certain that they will suggest a freer and less formal method of treatment. But animals and even fish lend themselves to decorative treatment. On page 70 is a photograph of a barrel of dried fish. What an amusing pattern it makes ; does it not suggest an original table-mat, especially if carried out in embroidered net ?

The sea is rich in decorative life—the heraldic sea-horse, the floral sea-anemone, the starfish and all the various kinds of seaweed, all these seem to invite the attentions of the designer. There is something almost aquatic looking about the photograph on page 69, though actually it is a “close-up” of the centre of a passion flower. If we get into the realms of photo-micrography a whole world of curious shapes lies before us, many of which, like the snow crystal, are complete designs in themselves only waiting to be adapted to circular or octagonal panels such as are often used for dinner mats. The line drawing on page 72 suggests other methods of treatment for botanical



*The treatment of flowers, birds and fruits in these traditional and typical examples is of a more or less cramped kind. The subjects have been bent to the over-riding consideration of the space they are intended to occupy. They are but charming units in a general scheme. (Illustrations by courtesy of "The Connoisseur.")*





subjects ; a running line of net embroidery for instance, or black and white work after the manner of Spanish needlework. For subjects in black and white with or without the intermediate tones of grey, what could be more lovely or more decorative than the snow picture on page 75, but the choice of stitches would have to be cleverly made lest the result should be a mere transcription of a picture such as the Japanese excel at, but which, as I have already said, is no very high form of art.

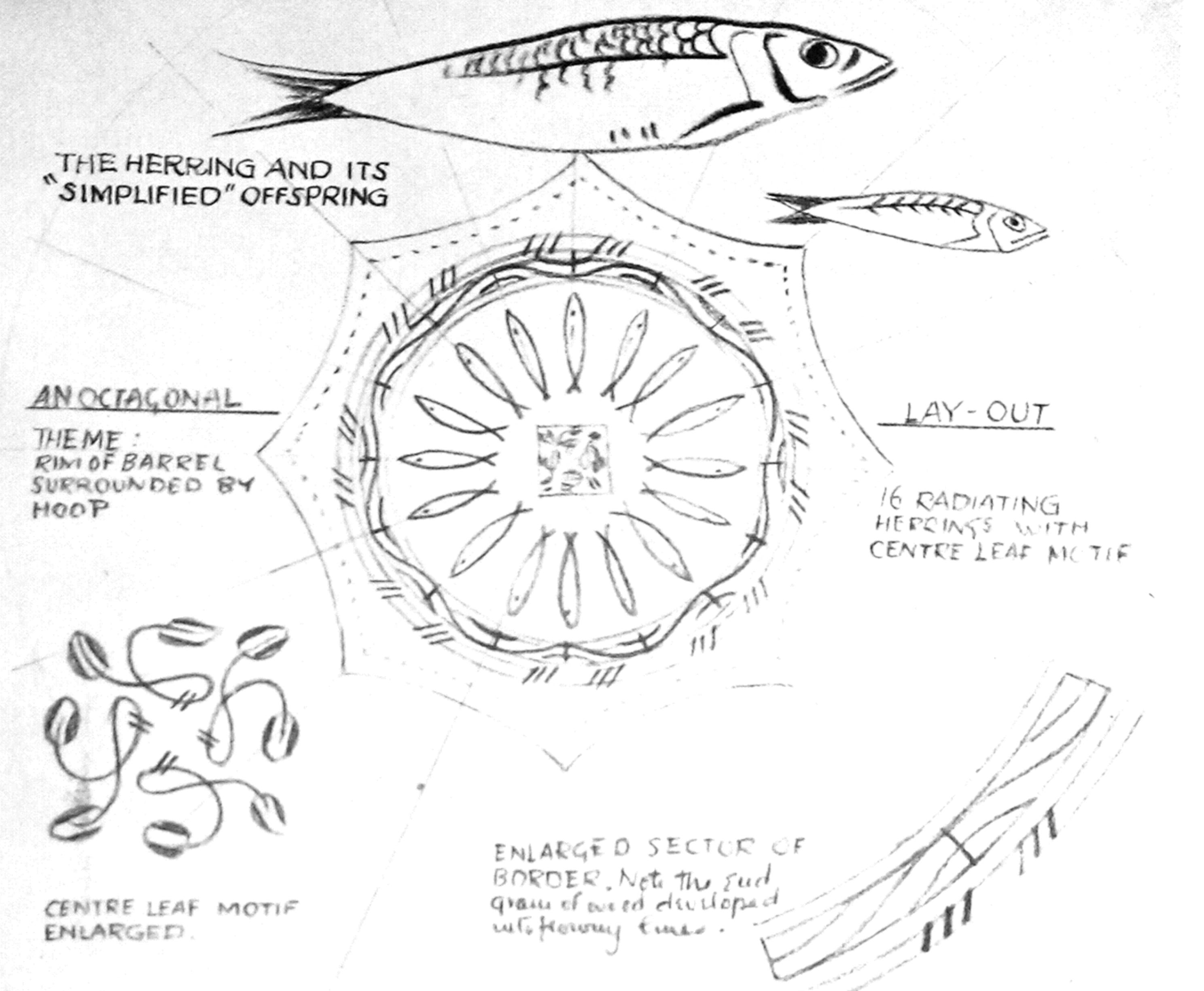
*Detail of a passion flower. From a photograph by H. Berssenbrugge, from "Modern Photography, 1937-38." (Opposite). Autumn flower arrangement in the 'free' manner, by Margaret N. Holme. Photograph: C. G. Holme.* Both these plates are illustrative of the modern attitude towards flowers. We have come to consider them so far superior to man's achievements that they deserve to have their way both in poise and in 'elbow room.' The tendency is now, therefore, to make other things subservient to them.



*"Les Poissons Secs."* This photograph was originally reproduced in "Modern Photography, 1935-36," and is the work of Sougez. The streamlined figures of fish have a new interest to-day.

*Theme*



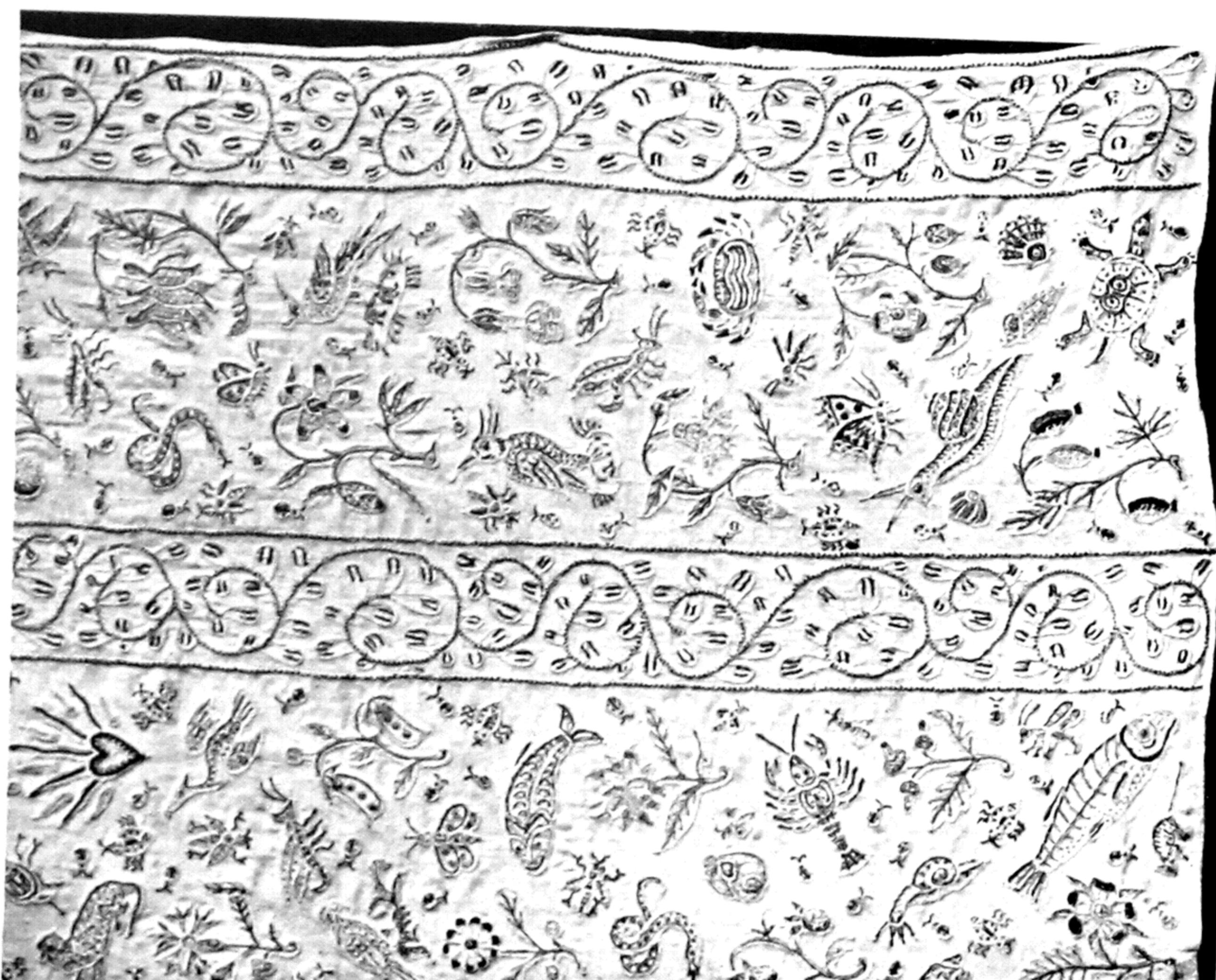


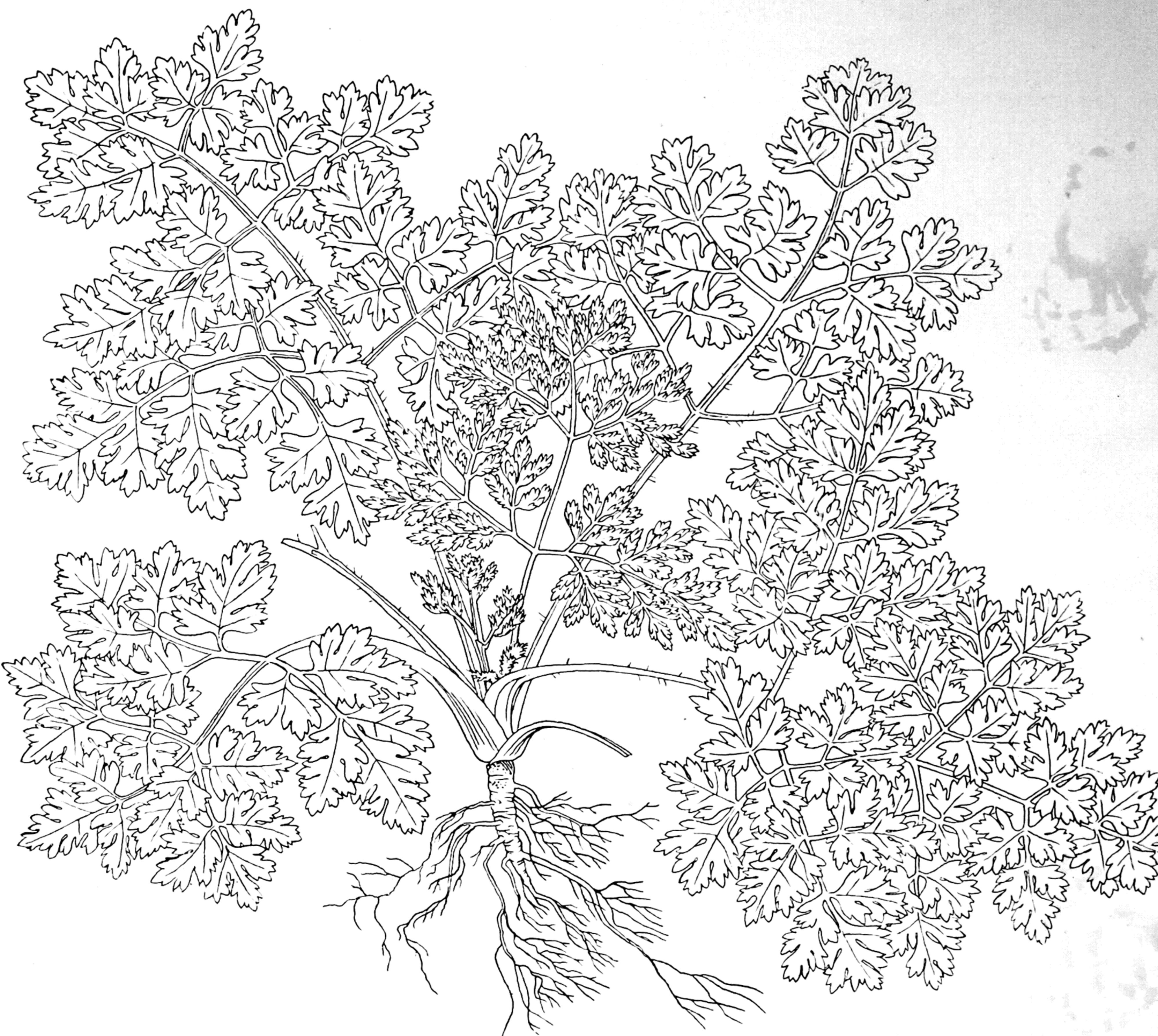
*Metamorphosis*

Illustrating one way in which the metamorphosis from photograph to embroidery, via diagram, could be effected.

Right: Suggesting a manner of 'handwriting' in which this theme could be carried out. (Courtesy of "The Connoisseur".)

*Execution*





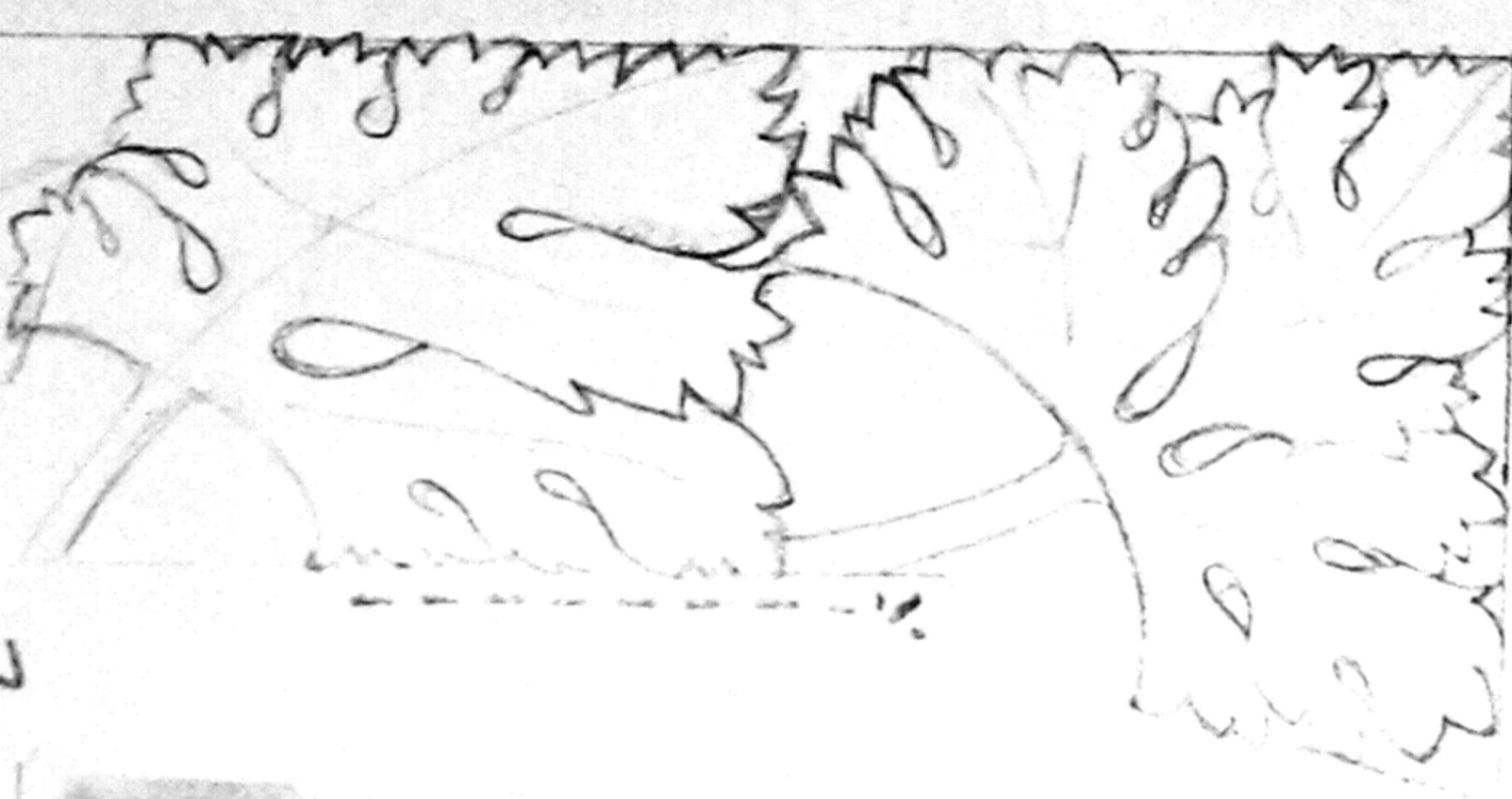
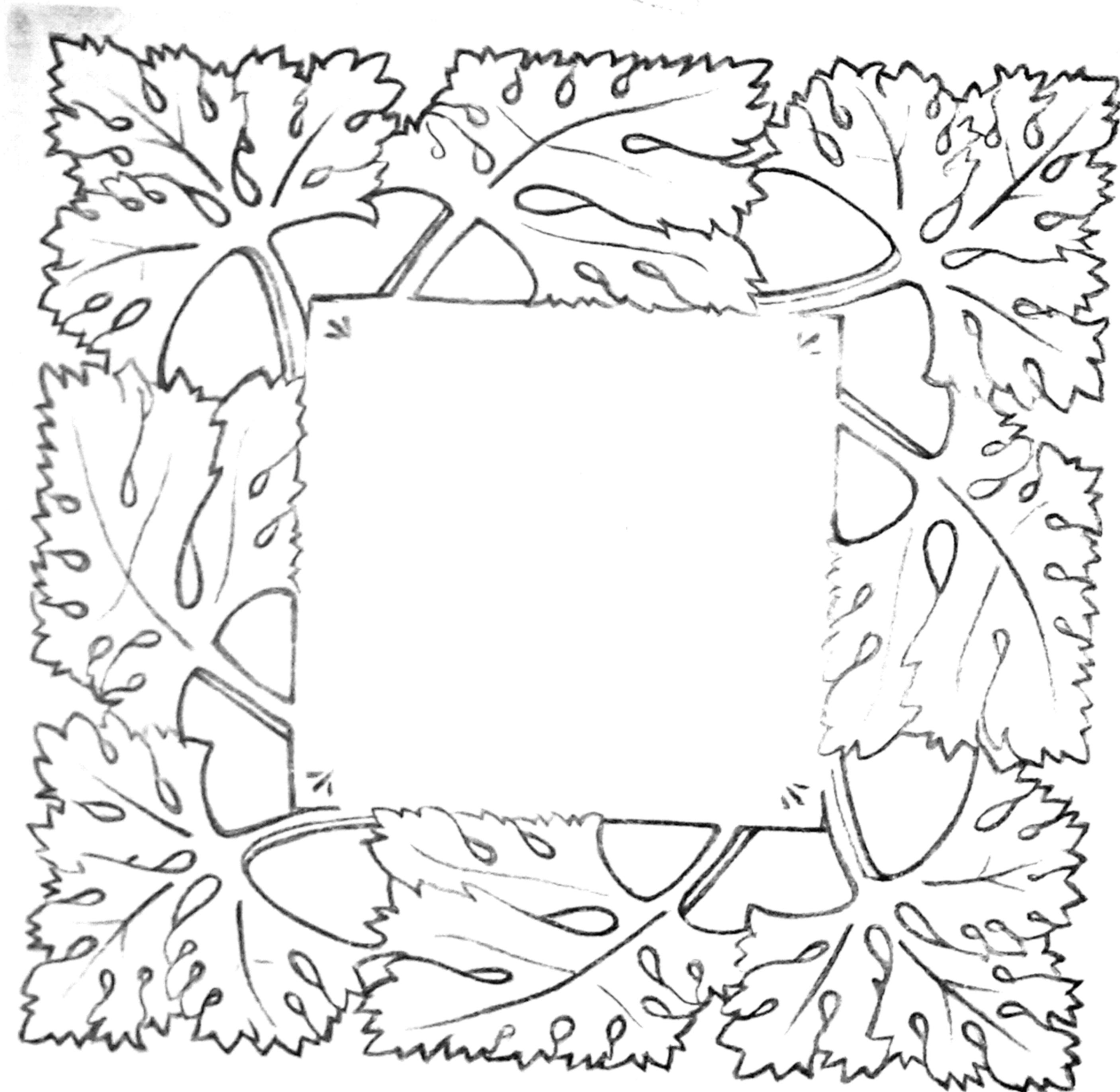
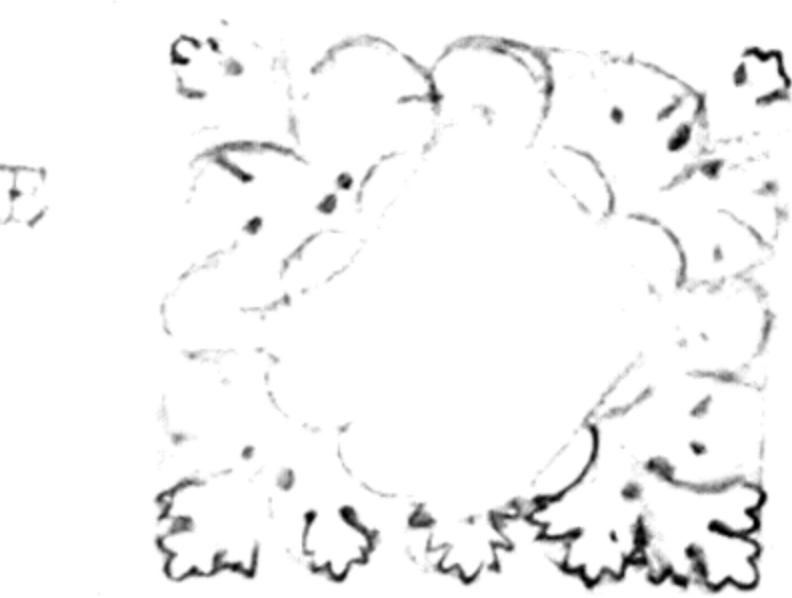
*Another simpler and more obvious change-over from a botanical drawing of a chervil plant to suggested layouts for table mats in Richelieu or other work. Pen drawing by Mark Severin.*

A B C D and E show alternative methods of arranging the foliage to conform with rectangular shapes.

CONSTRUCTION



ALTERNATIVE ROUGH LAY-OUTS

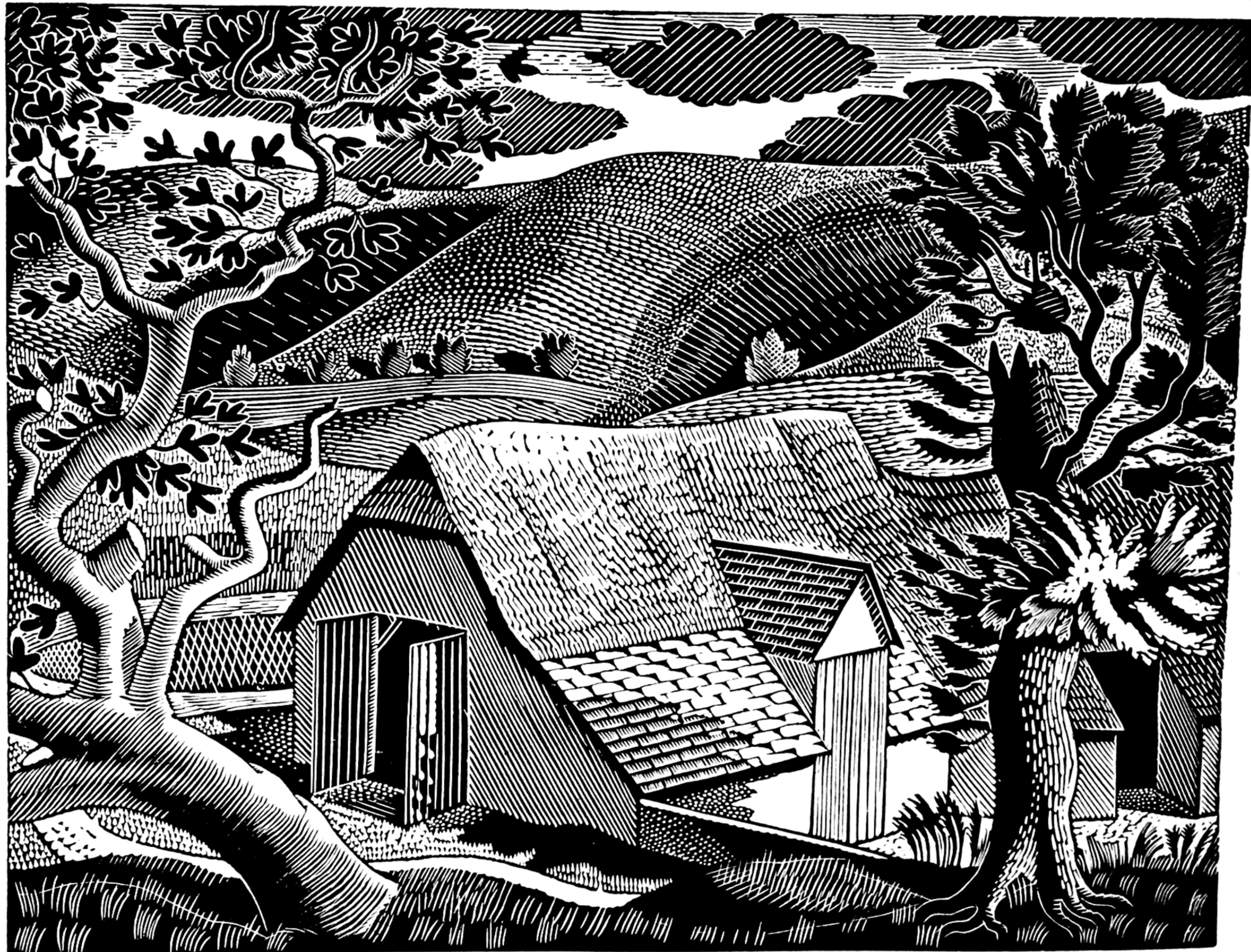


## INSPIRATION FROM MODERN TECHNIQUES

Thinking in terms of black and white reminds us that woodcuts are often a fruitful field of suggestion for the needleworker; in fact the landscape by Eric Ravilious below could almost be a design for needlework, and anyone using it for this purpose would almost have the choice of stitches settled for him by the artist.

At the Glasgow School of Art it is quite usual for a painted design to be sent to the worker who uses her own initiative in the selection of stitches, but the woodcut is even more helpful and illustrations on pages 62 and 83 show how the direction of the stitches would give force and variety to the work.

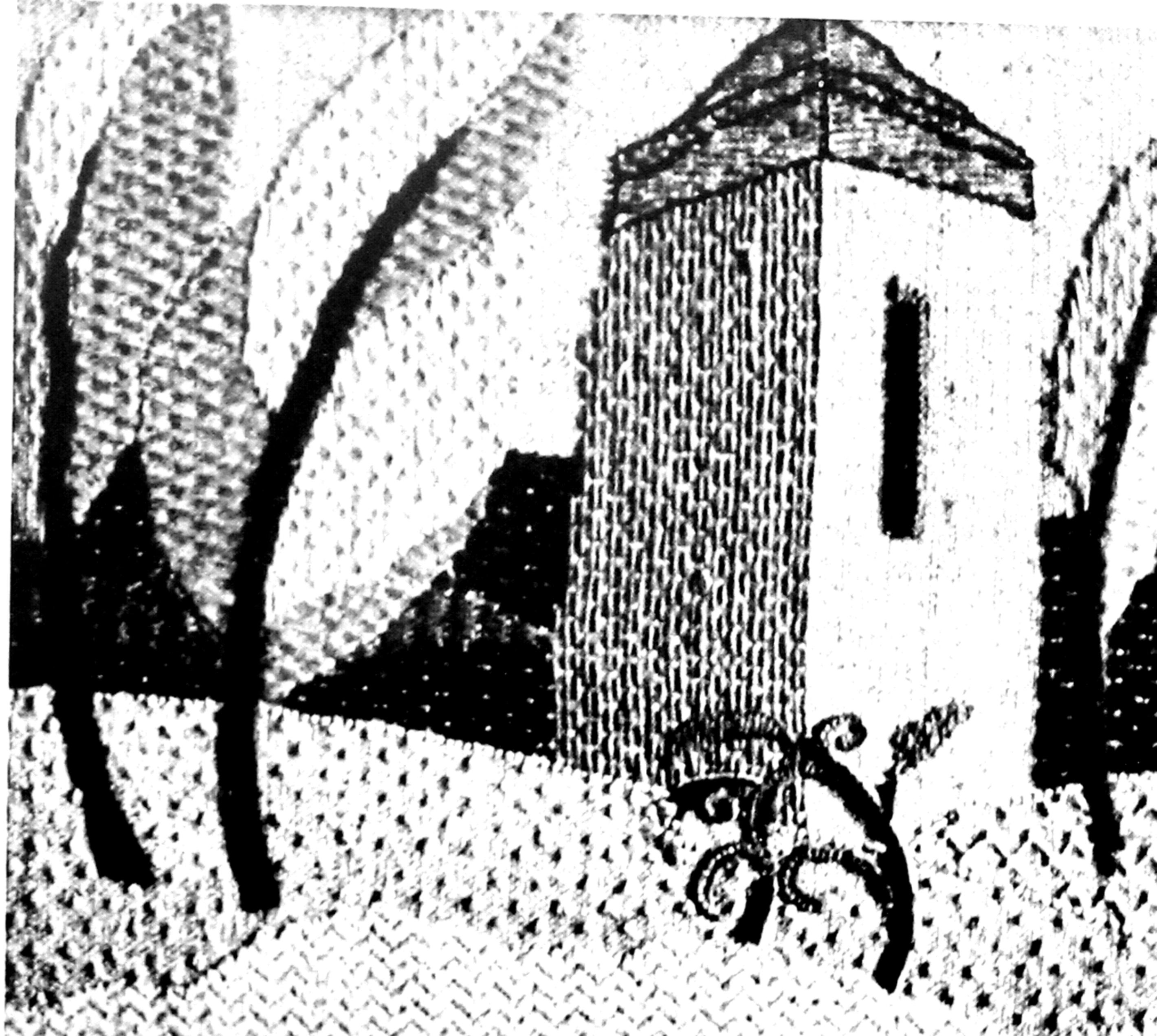
*Woodcut : "Sussex Landscape," by Eric Ravilious (Redfern Gallery), an illustration from "Wood Engravings of the 1930's." This example contains a good hint for the general direction of stitches for an embroidered landscape subject.*





Snow photograph, by Naritoshi Furukawa ("Modern Photography, 1938-39"). Of all the natural phenomena perhaps snow is as suggestive as anything for a full-blooded kind of embroidery. This photograph brings us to the point of visualising how an embroidered picture of the subject would look, for photography reduces a scheme full of coloured shadows and iridescence to one of tones and it is then a matter for individual taste to decide how far the work should be formalized. Naturalistic scenes when turned into terms of stitches are apt not to wear with the eye too well, becoming tiresome and laboured. A more inspiring effect is always to be gained by doing a good deal of thinking beforehand with the object of economising in labour and material.

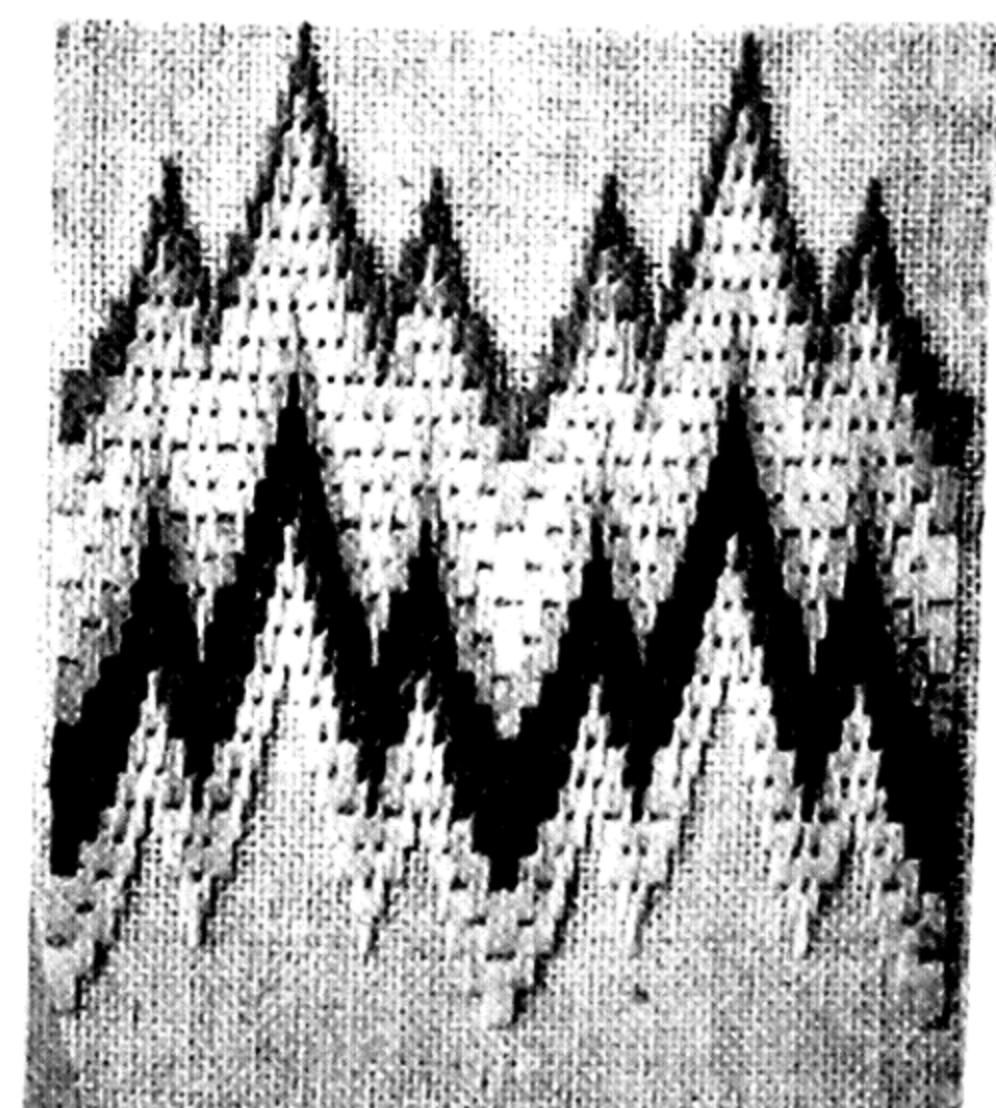
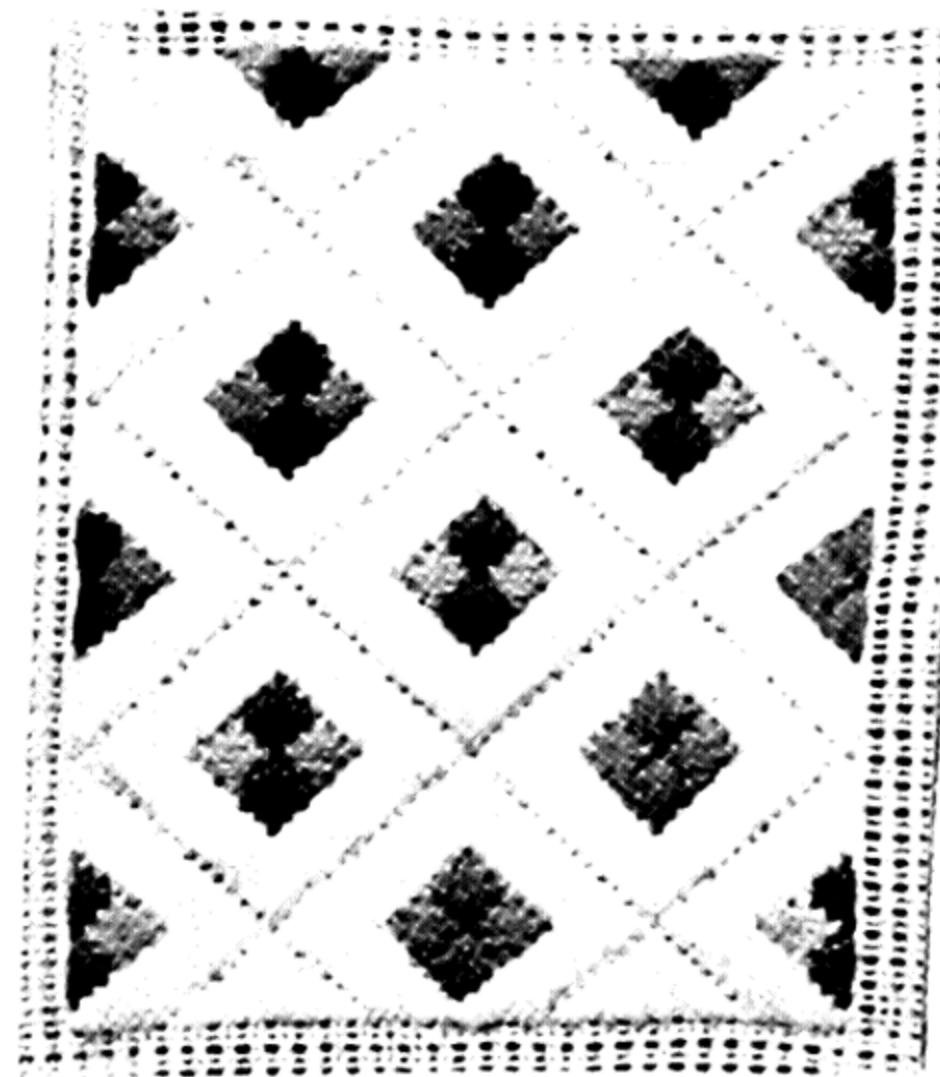
"Rural Scene," Worked with wools on canvas, using darning stitches and detached chain-stitch. Designed by Evelyn Anderton, of the Glasgow School of Art, and worked by Mrs. Allan of the Dumgoyne Rural Institute.





"*Harvest.*" Panel in linen worked with wool in chain-strokes, designed and executed by Lucy Bain, Glasgow. From the collection belonging to the scheme for Needle-work Development in Scotland.

The other small fragments on this and the opposite page are a reminder of the formalization and pattern which is a great part of the nature of embroidery, and which should not be entirely forgotten when freer technique is our mood.





The original is a mural panel in Mrs. Bellman's flat in Park Lane, London. Both its colouring and theme make it an admirable subject for an essay in embroidery. The clever elimination of outline and its treatment of well-interlocked areas of colour, succeeding as it does to cover interestingly the background, are virtues enough to give it an honourable place in a room of light colouring. This is the work of Hans Aufseeser.





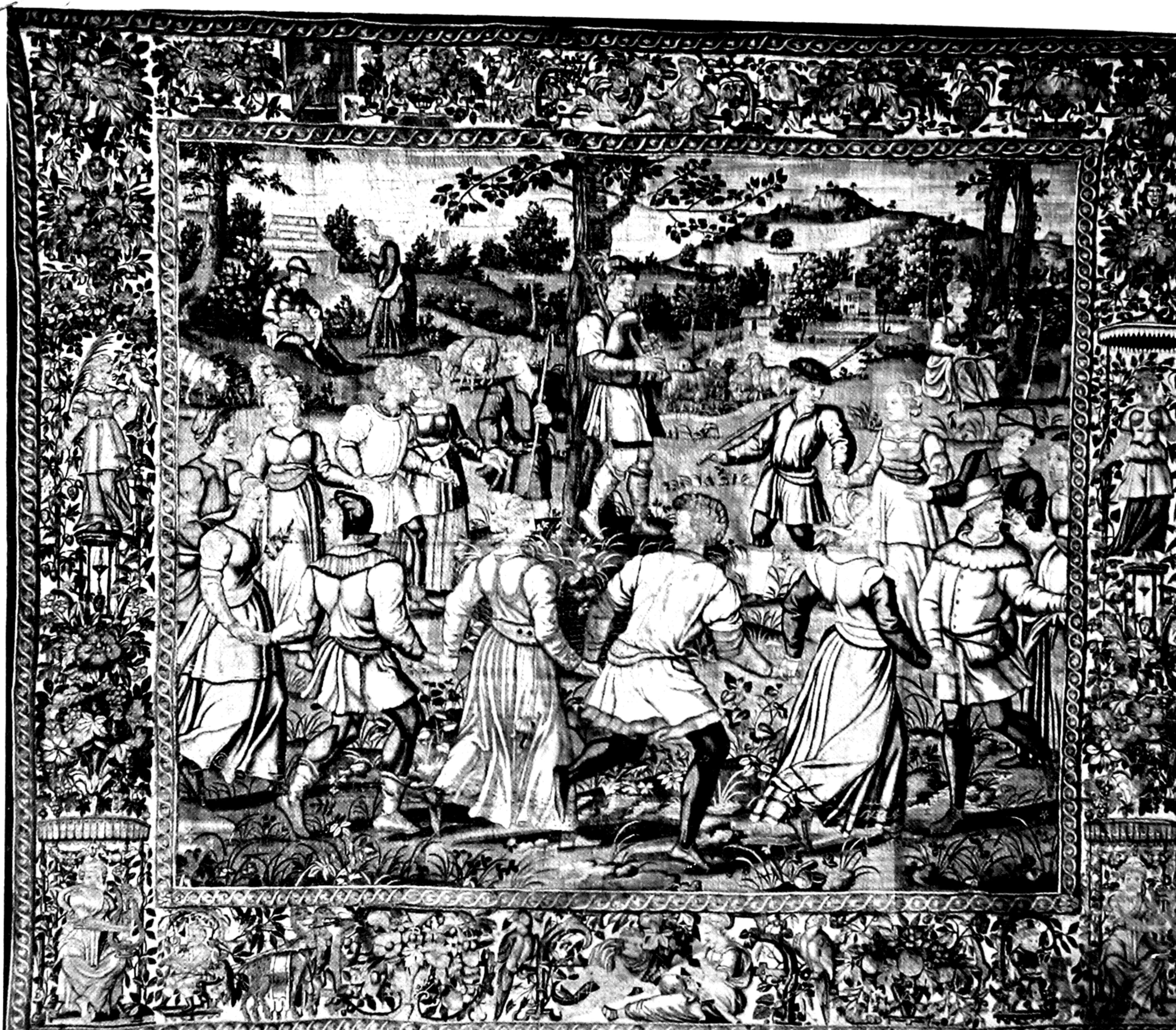
On pages 80 and 83 we have two rustic scenes, one from a panel of woven tapestry, the other from a woodcut, and it is interesting to find that once the idea of woodcuts as a source of inspiration to needleworkers has been accepted, the latter picture seems to lend itself more readily for translation into embroidery than the tapestry, which of course, in its time must have suggested much of the petit-point that we find on 17th century settees.

*"Summer Night in Stockholm."* (Painting by Hilding Linnqvist from "Contemporary Painting in Europe"—Studio). The manner in which this subject is carried out is capable of translation into either the technique of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt's "Cockatoo" (page 63), or of Miss Hebe Cox's "Cupid" (page 55).



Painters have always had a weakness for the waterfront—its picturesqueness is irresistible. Two such examples are to be seen on pages 79 and 84, and how decorative they are in their different ways ! The Stockholm scene by Linnqvist could be carried out in a variety of ways. So could Derain's backcloth for "La Boutique Fantasque."

*A fine example of traditional figures in a landscape setting. The technique of this tapestry is more in line with painting proper and, though a wonderful piece of work, it is only here and there that its textile quality asserts itself. The border is perhaps, from the embroidery point of view, just as interesting as the centre piece.*





*Here is an interesting use of a large scale design which has but a chance acquaintance with the actual form of the settee. Unfettered by the conventional form of the furniture which it adorns, this kind of treatment can on occasions be very attractive, but pitfalls are many for the unwary designer. The pieces of Mortlake tapestry which cover this 18th century walnut settee are all capable of faithful interpretation into embroidery. (By courtesy of "The Connoisseur.")*





Wood engraving "Les Romanichels" by J. Boullaire. (From "Wood Engraving of the 1930's"—Studio). Figures again in a landscape setting, but in a more modern tempo. This method of approach, with its thread-like lines, has possibilities for interesting work with the needle.

*Design for the backcloth for "La Boutique Fantasque" by Derain. (An illustration from "Ballet Design: Past and Present"—Studio). The original purpose of this work, as the title says, was for a backcloth or background. It serves much the same function as a tapestry hanging, but being in the modern vein its component subjects are different. It would take a very little stretch of the imagination to turn this convention into good account for embroidery.*





A design for the setting of "Le Coq d'Or," Act I, made by Natalia Goncharova. It is inspired by the peasant arts of Russia, much of which consisted of embroidered patterns and figures. It might almost be said that this vivid design suggests a fantasy in embroidery which came to life upon the stage when drilled by Michel Fokine to the music of Rimsky-Korsakov. It makes an interesting study in the art of expressing the carefree, warm glow of excitement enjoyed to the full by youthful society, and at the same time, a certain hankering after a quiet life by the older members. How telling is the purposeful yet well-proportioned use of contrasting colour. (Illustration from "Ballet Design : Past and Present"—The Studio Ltd.)



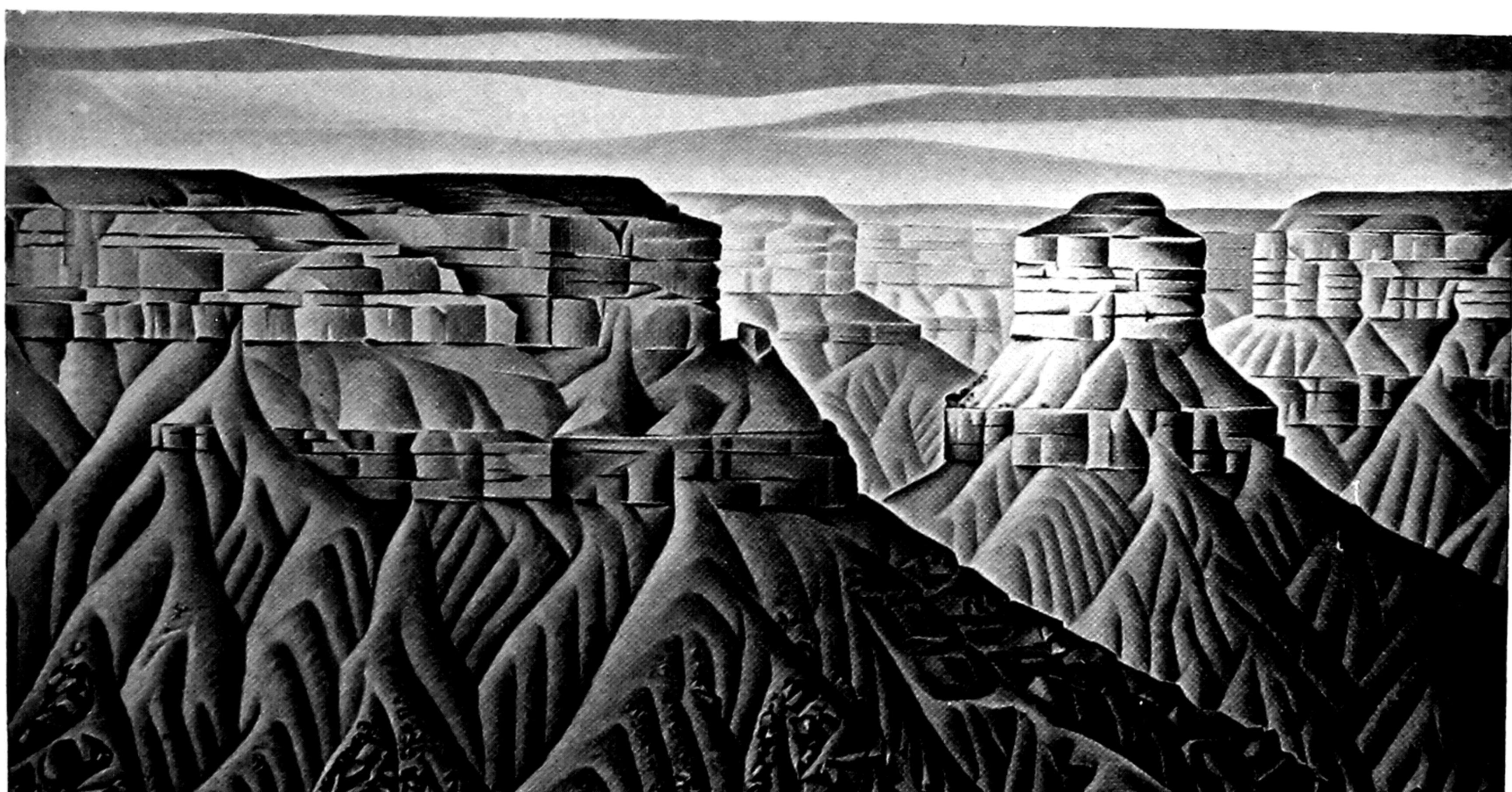
*Cushion of quilted silk. Designed and executed by a student of the Glasgow School of Art.*

*Below : This oil painting is called "Erosion," and is the work of the American painter Alexandre Hogue. (Reproduced from "Eyes on America"—Studio). A glance at page 89 will explain its presence here.*



### *A NEW USE FOR QUILTING*

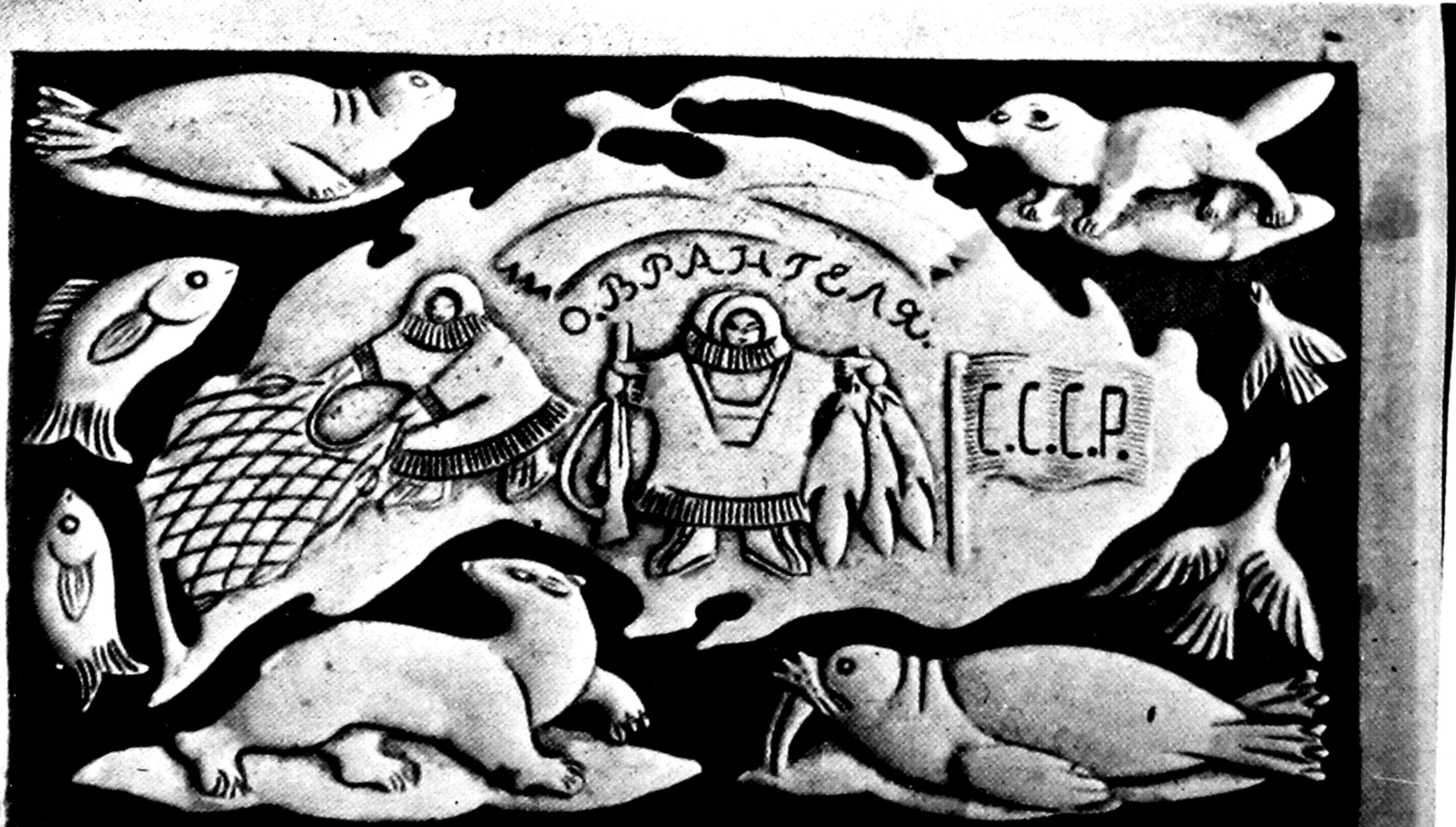
I don't think I have ever seen quilting used except in formal designs such as those for which the miners' wives of Durham and Wales are famous, an example of which can be seen on page 89. This is a very characteristic Welsh piece of rose leaf design, but Alexandre Hogue's picture of an American Cañon which he calls "Erosion" has a curiously padded look which suggests that quilting or stuffed work in the manner of the Stuart "stump" pictures could be utilised with good effect. The technique of stump work is of course entirely different from that of the quilter; in quilting, two materials are stitched together with a padding in between and the lines of the stitches provide the design or (as in so-called "Italian" quilting) the two



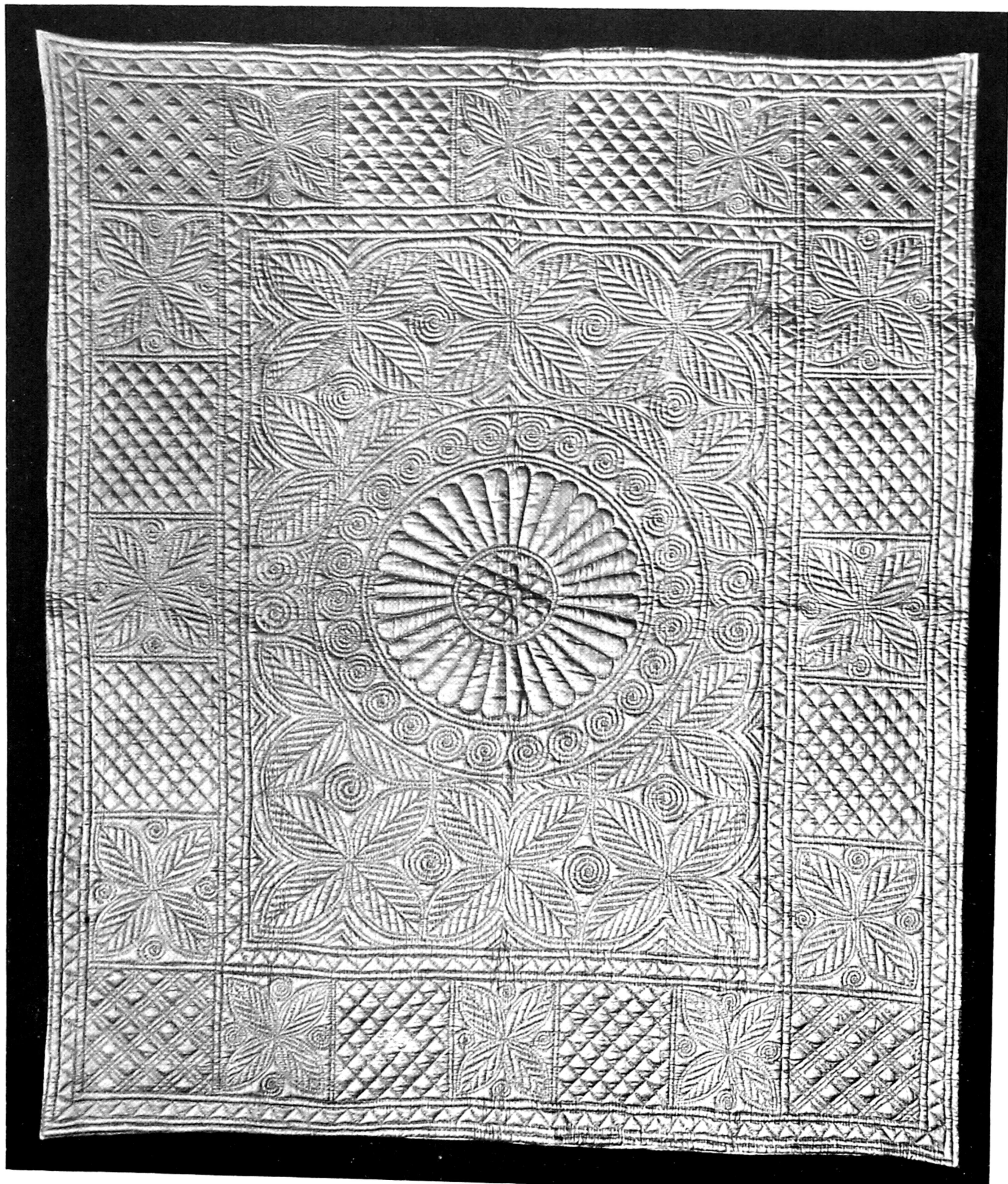


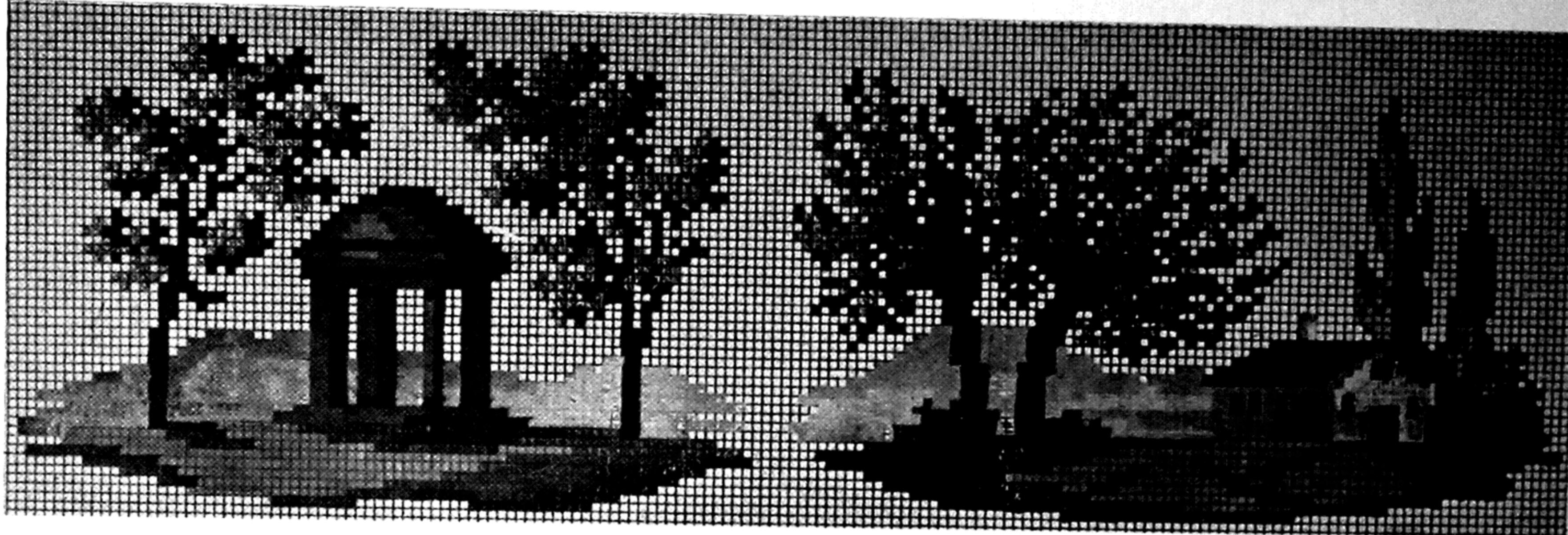
While page 87 carries a suggestion for a further development in quilting technique, the traditional Welsh quilt opposite is such a beautiful and at the same time typical example, with its arrangement of geometrical design, that it is difficult to imagine that improvement could be made by departing from the conventional plan. (Illustration by courtesy of Messrs. Shields Ltd., Knightsbridge.)

From quilting it seems natural enough to come to the bas-relief, which is but a step further along the same path. The "stump work" of Stuart times is, in fact, bas-relief in textile technique, a modern version of which might be suggested by these two examples. Above : A carved panel by Bainbridge Copnall, which is part of a series of panels in the main restaurant of R.M.S. Queen Mary representing the history of shipping. Below : a bone box lid carved with a map of Wrangel Island, by M. Rakov.



pieces of stuff are stitched with a double line, and a cord or strip of wadding is inserted between the lines to give the desired raised effect. In stump work the figures or other objects which it is intended to show in relief are worked separately, the padding being of wool or hair sewn on to canvas or linen, though even wooden foundations are sometimes used, the figures being then covered with embroidery ; then they are cut out and appliquéd on to the background, the spaces in between the objects being finally covered with embroidery, jewels or metal thread. It would be amusing to create a modern





variant of the stump picture and for inspiration we naturally turn to sculpture or bas-relief. Plates on page 88 suggest that they might be interpreted in raised work, though the figures in the panel by Bainbridge Copnall would have to be isolated in order to avoid a crowded effect.

### *THE PRINCIPLES OF POINTILLISM FOR EMBROIDERY*

The pointillistes were the first painters to translate mosaic into the medium of oil-paint, but it is evident that many of our modern painters have been influenced in the same way. Why should not the embroiderer see whether mosaic has any suggestions to offer? Look now at the photograph below of a mosaic pavement. In its reduced state it might almost be mistaken for needlework and the ribbon border could actually be carried out in real ribbon.

### *A THEATRICAL LEAD*

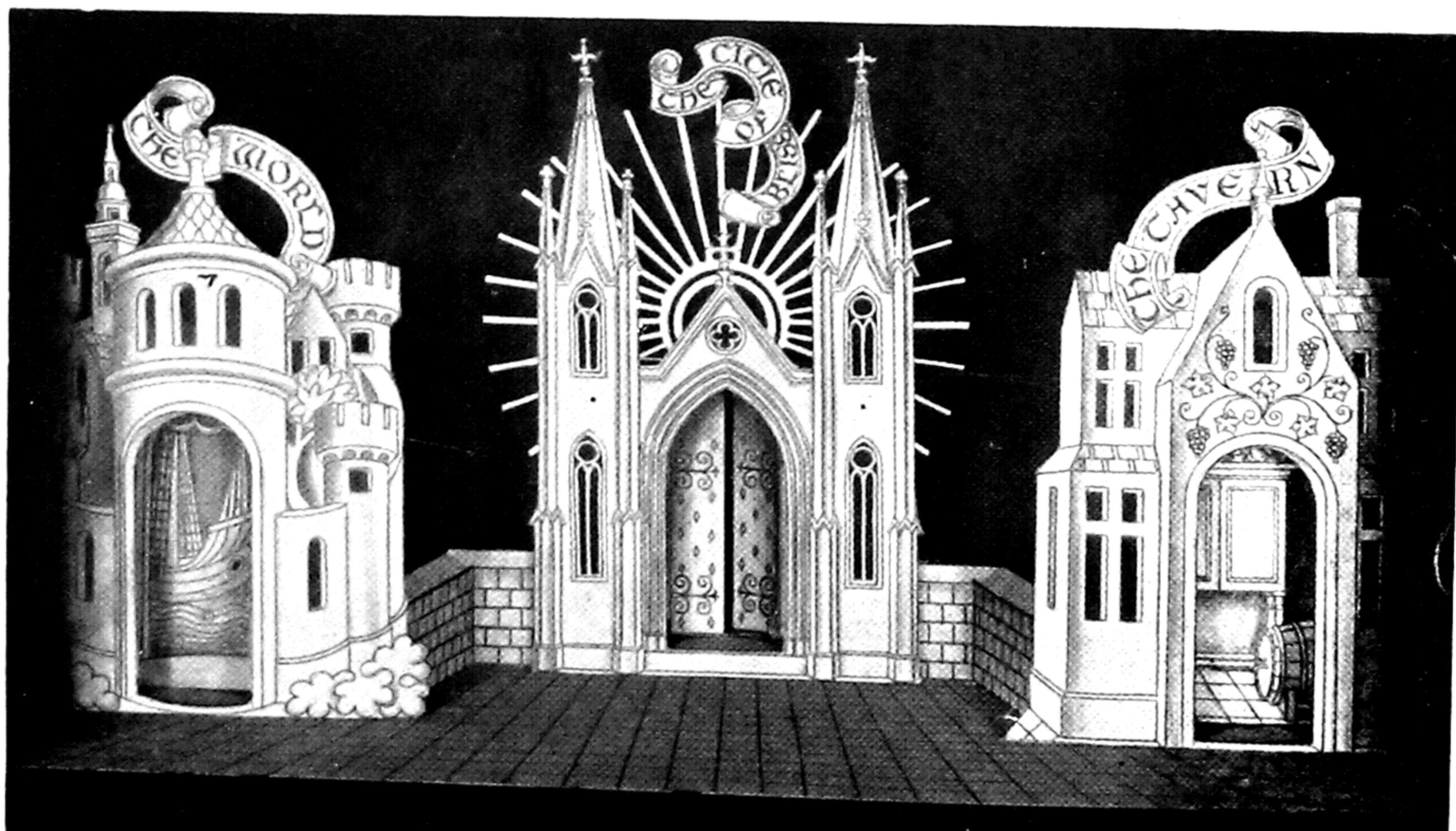
Theatrical decoration throughout the ages has attracted even the most famous artists and many of their designs could be advantageously studied by the needleworker. Le Pautre's engraving of a performance at Versailles could be treated in a variety of different ways, as a small picture or as a large hanging, and the formalised design, almost heraldic in feeling, in the "Tudor Interlude" would make an excellent background for gay figures.





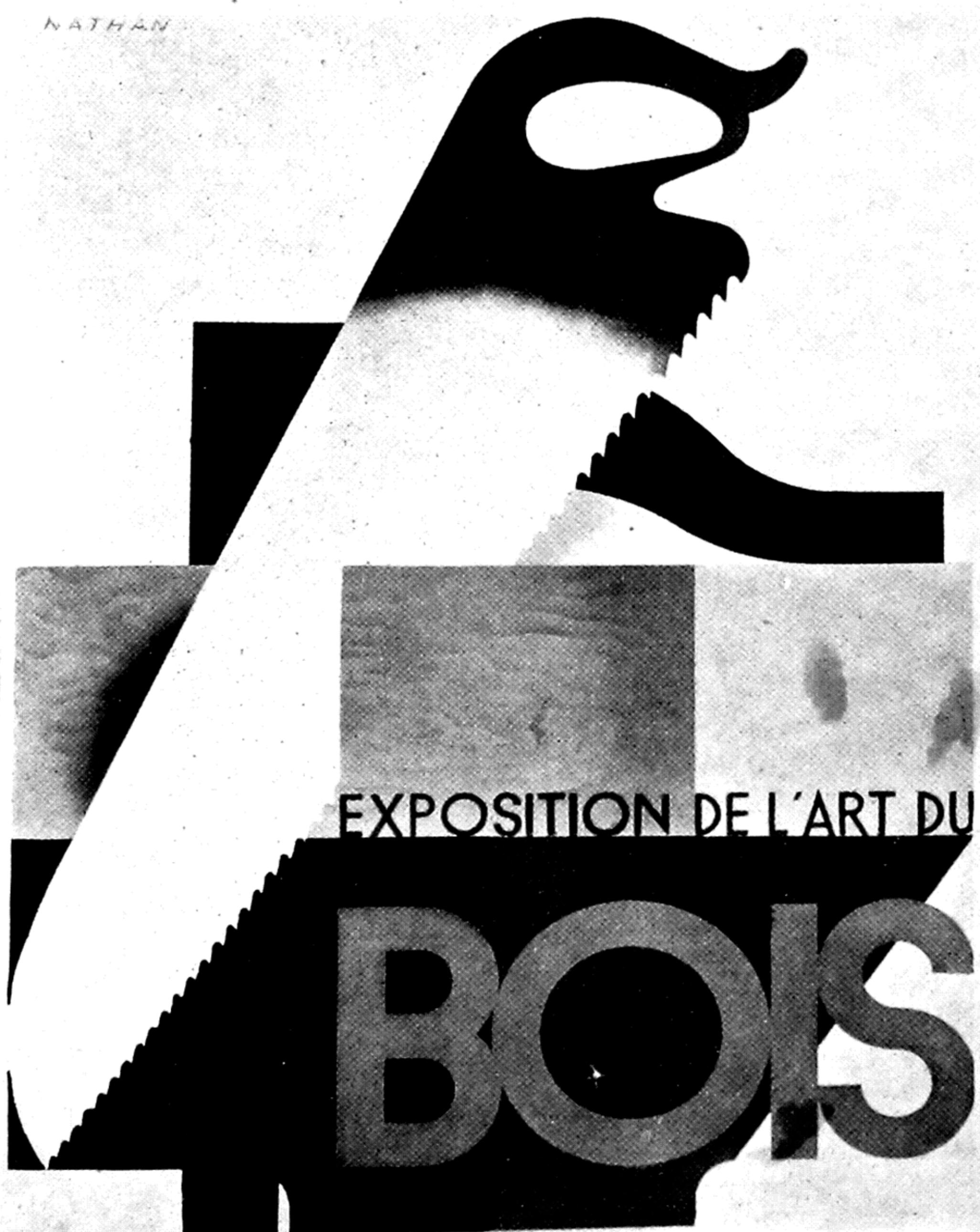
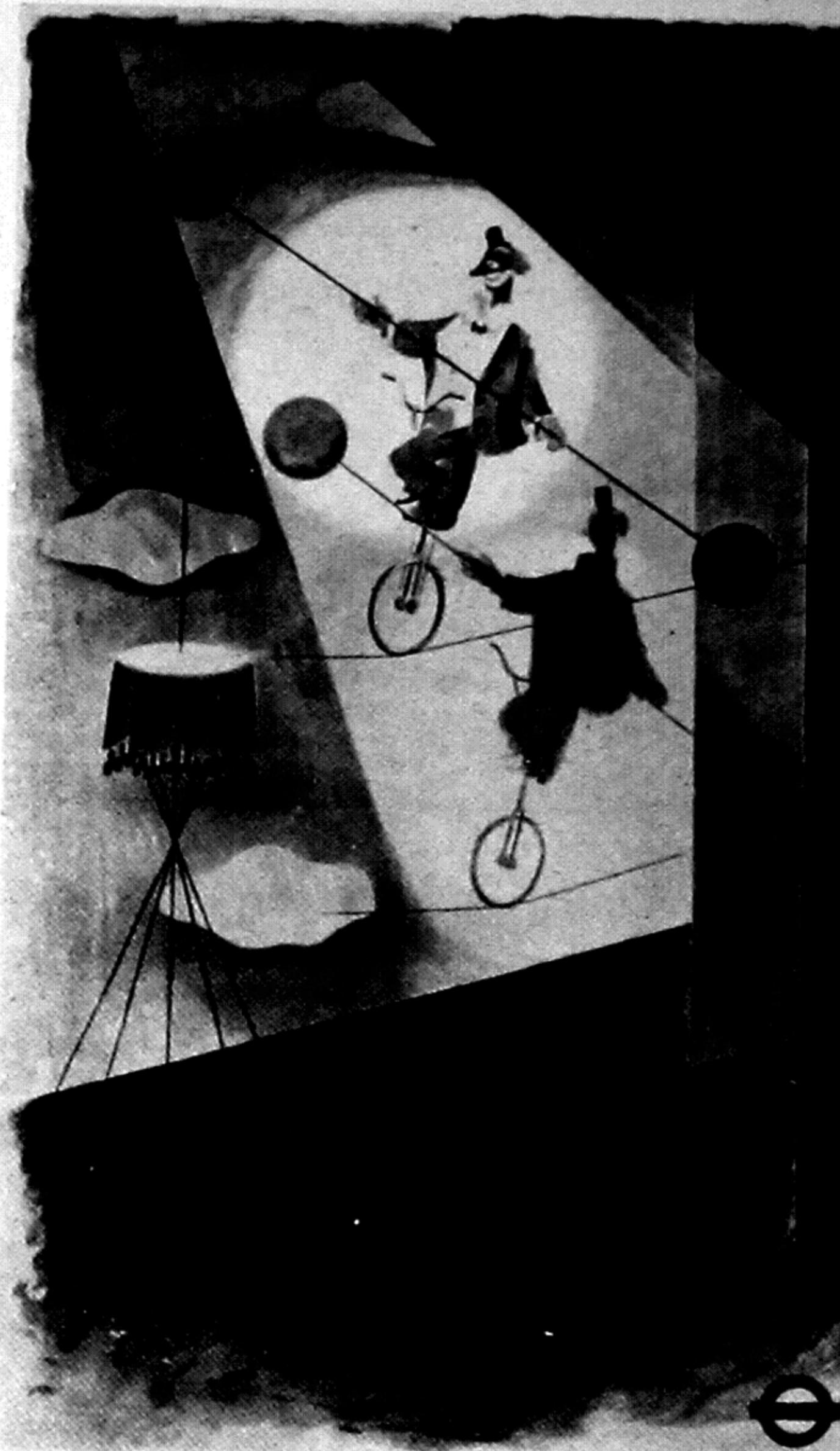
Page 90 (top) A "squared-up" design for motifs in cross-stitch shows the affinity of embroidery design to that of mosaic; (bottom) part of a border of an old mosaic pavement (courtesy of "The Connoisseur.")

Above : An engraving by Le Pautre of a scene from "Alceste," as it was given at the court of Versailles in 1676. (From "Ballet Design : Past and Present"—Studio.) The manner of treatment of such a subject might be suggested by comparison with some of the detail in the border of the plate on pages 24 and 25. Below : Opening setting for "Tudor Interlude," which was painted entirely in shades of gold, outlined and shaded in black, contains ideas for an embroidered setting. (Illustration from "The Theatre in Action"—Studio).



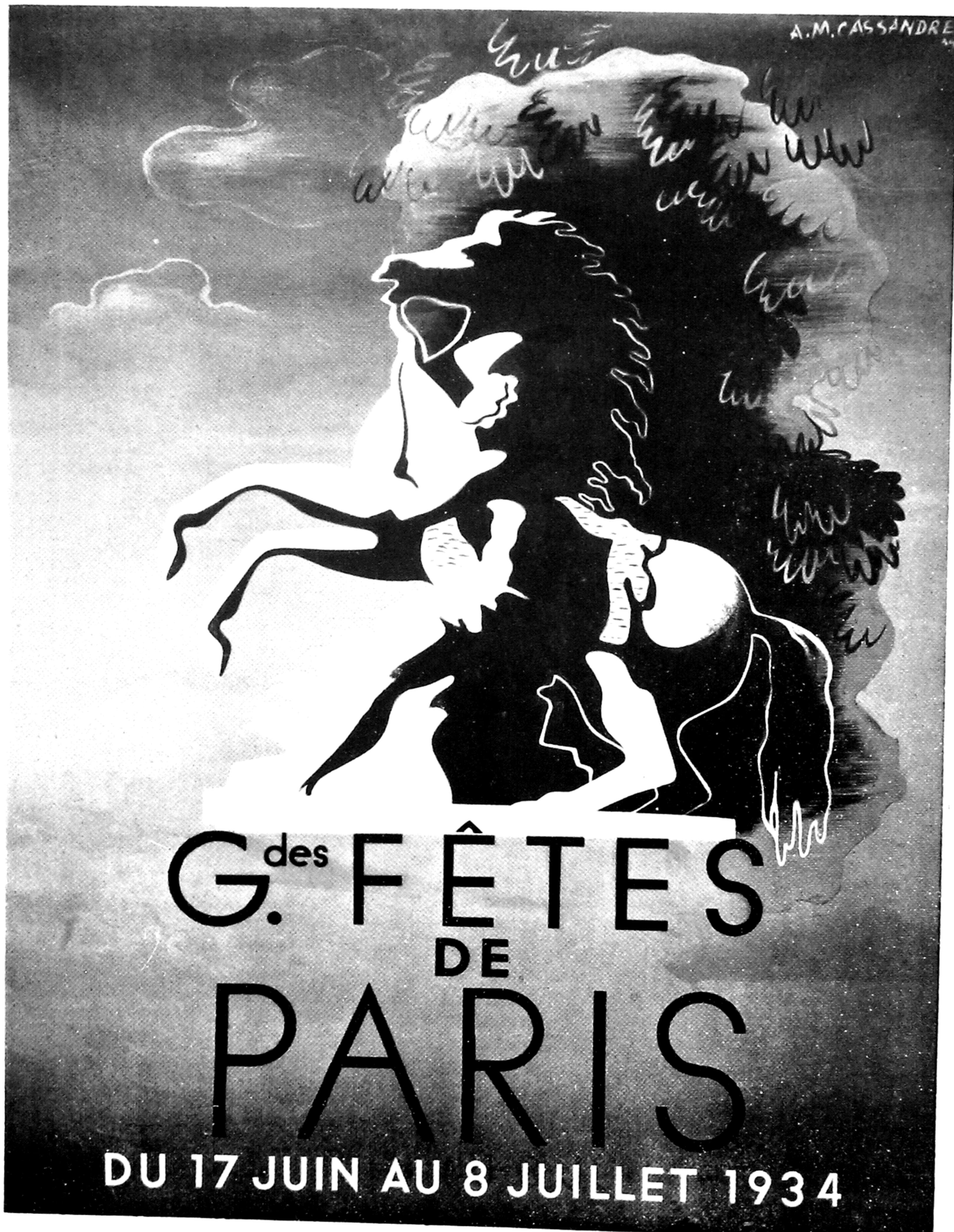
*Poster for London Transport, by James Fitton. Consider the possibilities of this subject with the technique of the plate on page 52.*

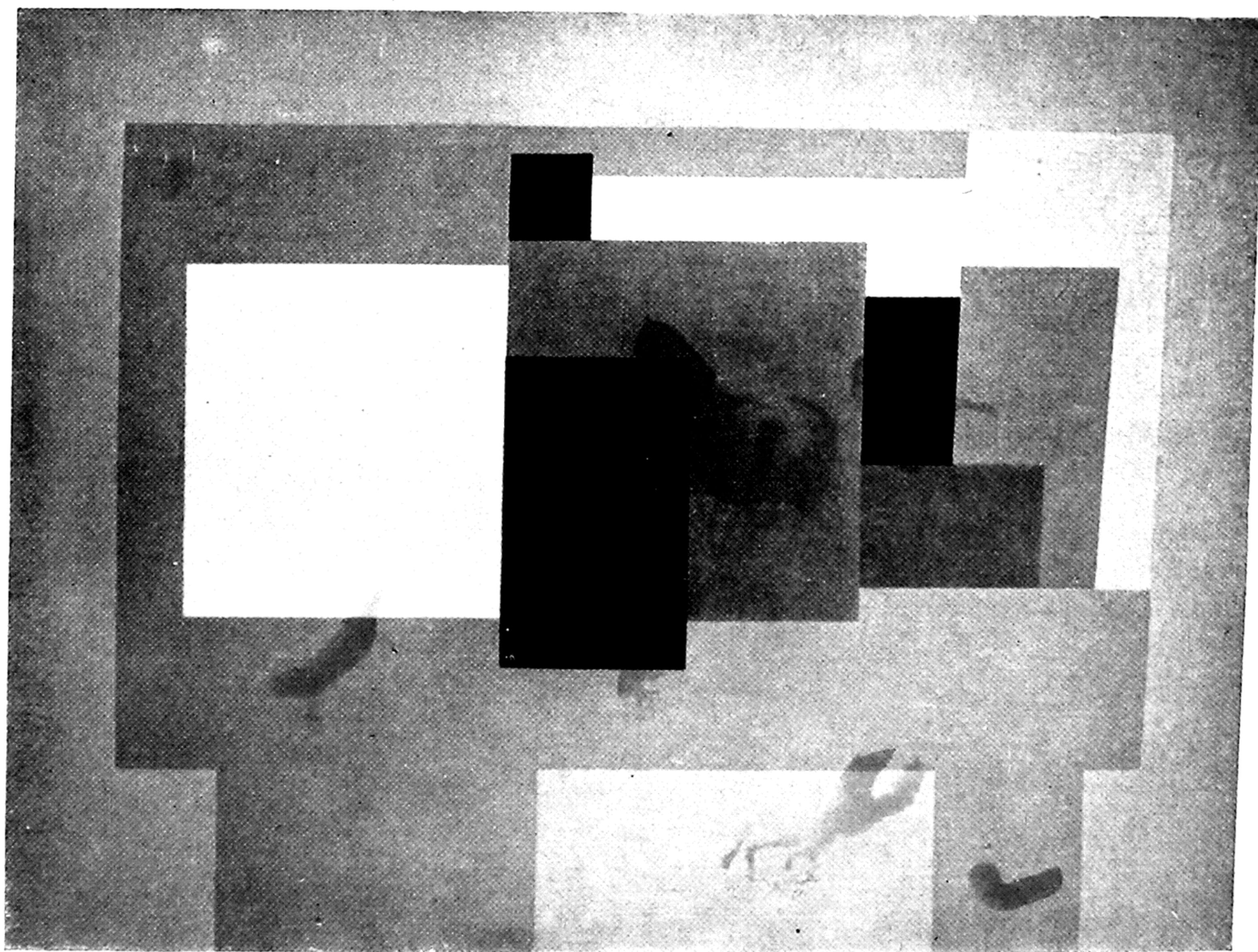
*Below : Poster by Nathan. This treatment lends itself to a certain kind of embroidery. It is a pleasing composition of shapes, and was intended to catch the eye and attention to an exhibition of woodwork. It is again heraldic in its effectiveness, using all the well-tried avenues of that ancient art to effect its purpose. Whether one uses primary colours or subtle hues, the laws of heraldry as to what colour may go upon another hold good. It is not suggested that you copy this poster by Nathan, or for that matter any of the examples given here, but that the principles governing the choice of subject and its execution should be studied and applied to other subjects. One can get inspiration from practically any kind of printed advertising, even packaging, as is seen in the chair back and seat design on page 53.*



*Right : A Poster by A. M. Cassandre which would make an interesting study for the needle.*

Bakst and the other Russian artists who did so much to popularise the ballet in this country could provide many ideas and their designs call for treatment in silks or other gay and rich materials. In a lighter vein is the circus scene from a London Transport poster, and one can imagine layers of embroidered net being used to give the effect of light and shade. I can visualise a glass firescreen with varying thicknesses of net stretched on a frame, the details





*Poster for Swiss Federal Railways, by Alois Cariget.*

*Left : Painting by Grant Wood, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." (Courtesy of the Walker Galleries, New York.)*

*Although both these plates have a semblance of embroidered work in their details, they form a valuable demonstration of the disposition of those details and of how the ribbony roads are used to tie the whole design together, much in the same way that a free flowing stem is useful to hold together fruit, flowers and leaves.*

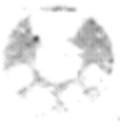
*Lower Left : Painting, 1937, by Ben Nicholson. (From "Contemporary Painting in Europe"—Studio). The careful balance of areas with tone and colour values is in itself an art which must not be overlooked.*



*En route pour la*

*Suisse*

Swiss Railways



of the figures, etc., being darned in brightly coloured thread. But let me not make detailed suggestions, merely throw some ideas at the reader's head and hope that they may bear fruit. As I have said, the circus picture was originally a poster and posters have a decorative value that is the first essential in needlework. These pages will illustrate what I mean without further comment. Nathan's design of a saw, is little more than a clever arrangement of tones and forms, as is the painting by Ben Nicholson, the whole value in these designs depending on a judicious choice of colours and tonic values. Grant Wood's attractive picture "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere," opposite, has rather a poster quality, the ribbony road reminding one of the Swiss Railway advertisement above, but it too offers ideas for translation into stitchery.

So we see how infinite in variety are the sources of inspiration and it is remarkable how many forms of decoration can be turned into needlework designs. Apart from those which we have already mentioned, the sprays from painted pottery and china, the lovely lines of 17th and 18th century ironwork, even the borders of Victorian wallpapers can all be adapted to different kinds of stitchery and a collection of photographic details of any of these, in post-card form, will make an invaluable reference book.

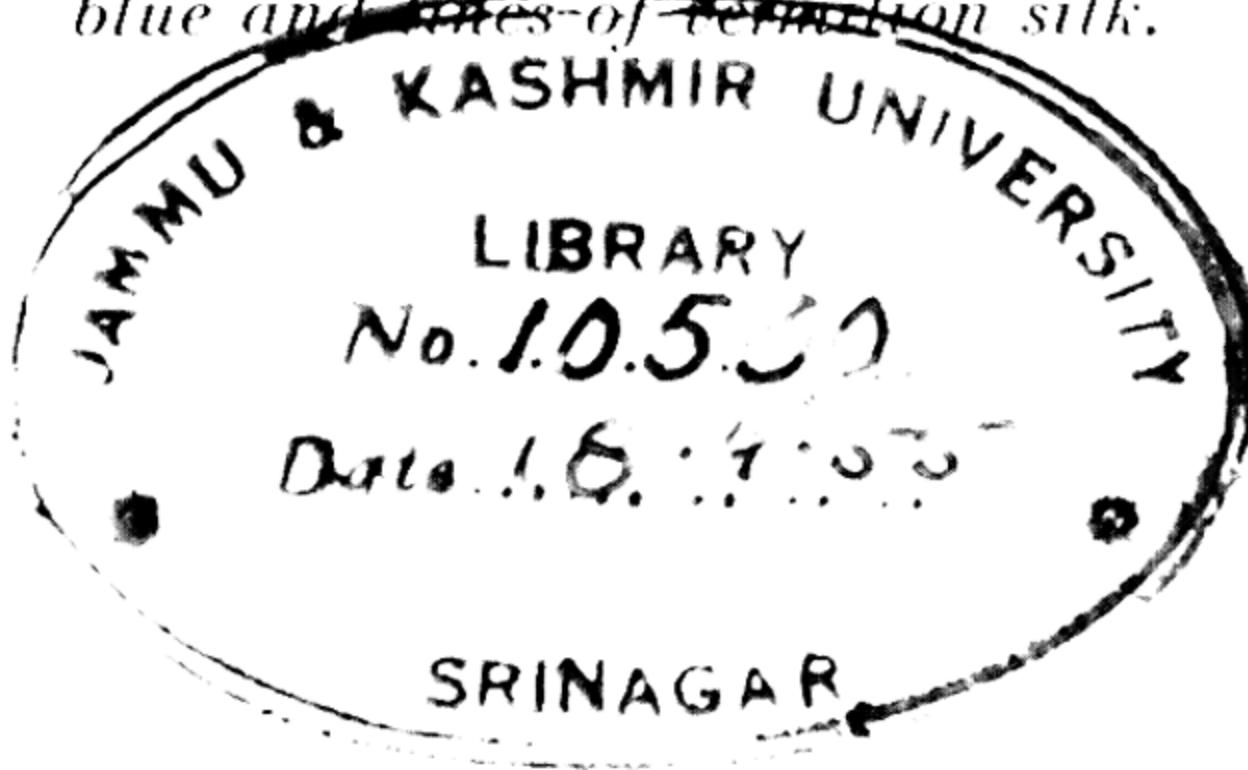
### *INGENUITY, INVENTION AND ADAPTABILITY*

It requires as much ingenuity to adapt a design as to invent one, but whether adapted or invented, anything is better than a mere copy of someone else's work and the needleworker who can adapt a pattern from another source is half-way along the road to being a successful designer.



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*Chair seat, designed by Picasso, and worked in tent-stitch by Miss Tess Hope in shades of brown, black and white, light and dark pink, blue and ~~lines of~~ ~~pink~~ silk.*



تم کو دنیا میں نفیب ہو اتنا کر کو جائے  
آسمان بھی پری رکھتا پہ نا زندگی